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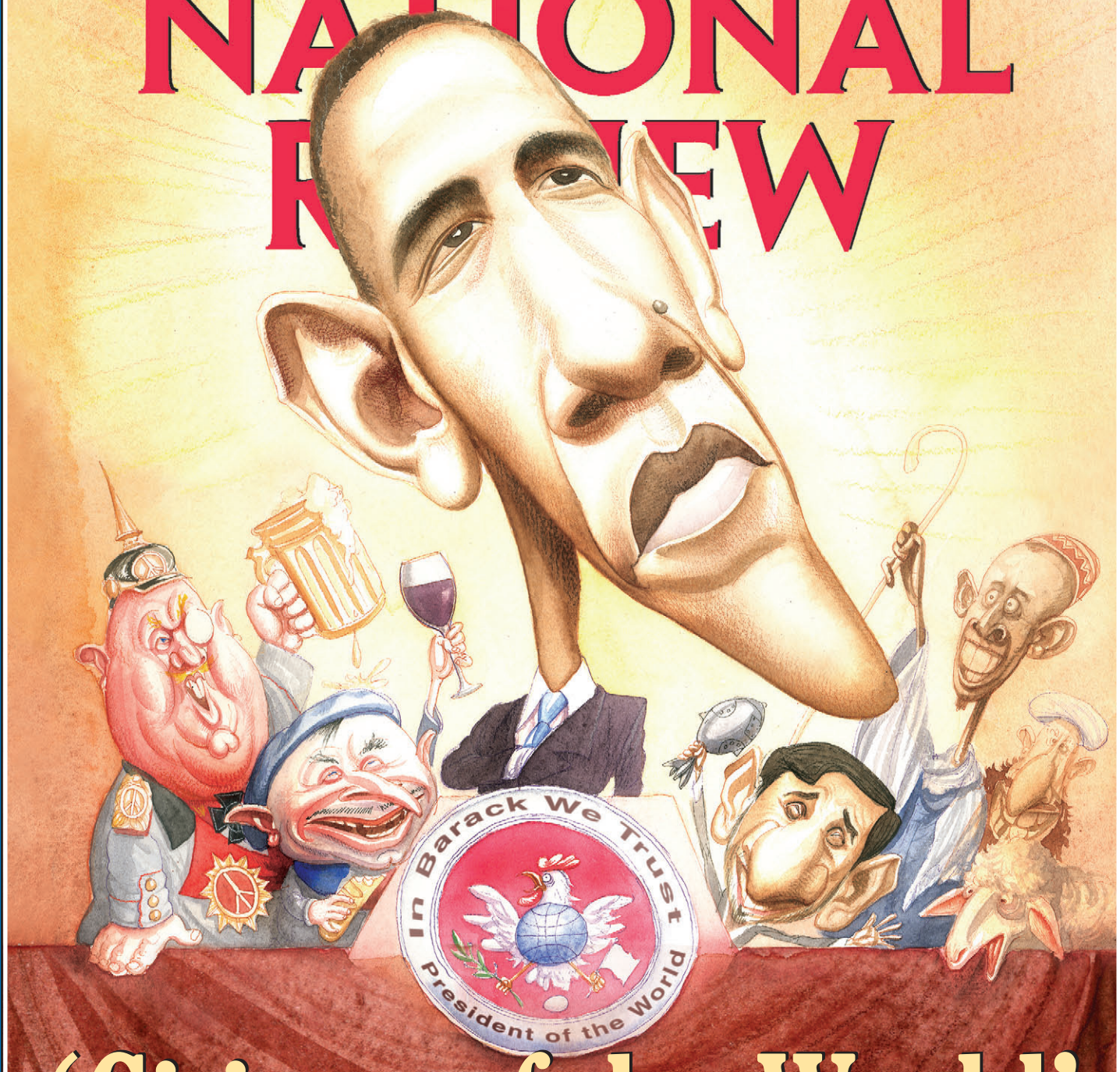
WILLIAM TUCKER: The False Promise of Wind Power

NATIONAL REVIEW



'Citizen of the World'

THE OBAMA CONCEIT

Jonah Goldberg
The Editors

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NATIONAL REVIEW

AUGUST 18, 2008 VOL. LX, NO. 15

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■ COVER STORY

'Hear Me, Earthlings!'

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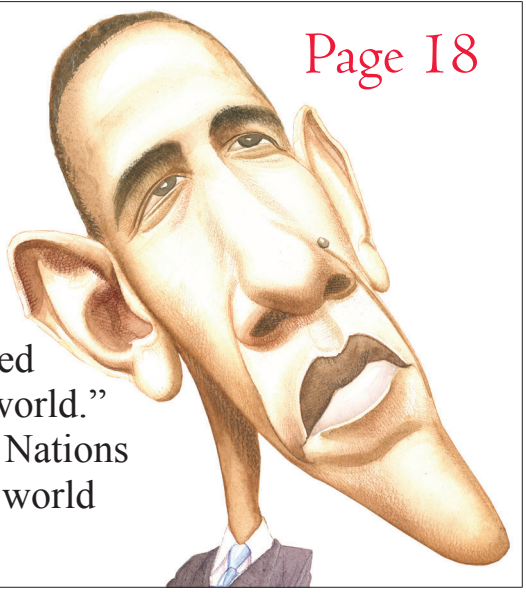

Speaking near the Brandenburg Gate, Barack Obama proclaimed that he was visiting Berlin not as a politician, but as a "proud citizen of the United States" and—this is the telling part—as a "fellow citizen of the world." Ronald Reagan used the same phrase, but there are no "citizens of the world." Citizenship requires a state, and unless the United Nations has started issuing passports for all earthlings, the world has no citizens. *By Jonah Goldberg*

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COVER: *Roman Genn*

National Review (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by National Review, Inc., at 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. ©National Review, Inc., 2008. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc., to Editorial Dept., National Review, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc., to National Review, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668; phone, 815-734-1232, Monday–Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., National Review, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to National Review, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668. Printed in the U.S.A.

RATES: $59.00 a year (24 issues). Add $21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork unless return postage or, better, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

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NATIONAL REVIEW

August 18 issue; printed July 31

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WASHINGTON OFFICE 202-543-9226
ADVERTISING SALES 212-679-7330
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letters to the editor

UNCHARITABLE CATHOLICS

I was both surprised and distressed to learn the following in Kevin D. Williamson's "Lost Generation" (August 4): "Catholic Charities in Massachusetts suspended their adoption activities when the state attempted to force them to abandon their moral objections to facilitating adoption by homosexual couples, leaving the Bay State's children bereft of an important ally in their search for families."

The sentence is phrased in such a way as to blame the government, but Catholic Charities deserves opprobrium as well. A charity concerned with helping children should not abandon this mission for political reasons. Furthermore, it makes no sense to reject the services that homosexuals may be willing and able to provide.

George Jochnowitz
New York, N.Y.

KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON REPLIES: A decent society makes room for the conscience, especially the conscience of an organization that does as much good for the world as Catholic Charities USA does. The group's adoption work is of a piece with the church's teaching on sexuality—a seamless garment.

NOT SO SWIFT

"The Week" (August 4) says without explanation that "the Swifties got a few things wrong." I would appreciate your telling me about these errors, because there is a large, as-yet-uncollected reward for disproving any of the Swift Boat Vets' claims.

Lawrence A. Post
Clayton, Calif.

THE EDITORS REPLY: Back in 2004, we looked carefully into each of the Swift Boat Veterans' charges. We found some allegations to be quite credible and damaging, like the vets' "Christmas in Cambodia" account and their questions about Kerry's first Purple Heart. On the other hand, our Byron York wrote that some of the vets' charges had "fallen short." For example, there was no good evidence that the wound that resulted in Kerry's second Purple Heart was accidentally self-inflicted, as the vets had alleged. And York wrote that the "weakest case" made by the vets concerned the action that led to Kerry's winning the Silver Star; the vets suggested Kerry had killed a fleeing, loincloth-clad teenager instead of the tough Viet Cong guerrilla of lore. Others who were there contradicted the vets' account. Now, none of that will win any prize for "disproving" the vets' claims, especially since all witnesses' memories are nearly 40 years old. But we think it's fair to say they got some things wrong.

CLARIFICATION

In his article on Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty (August 4), John J. Miller cited a 2006 article from the *Star Tribune* in which Pawlenty said, "The era of small government is over." The *Star Tribune* later clarified that Pawlenty was not expressing his personal view, but that of *New York Times* columnist David Brooks.

NATIONAL REVIEW encourages letters to the editor. Letters can be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters will be edited for space and clarity.

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THE WEEK

■ Obama shot a three-pointer. The list of accomplishments grows.

■ A reader of ours spotted a bumper sticker: "Faith . . . Hope . . . Obama." And the greatest of these?

■ President Bush abandoned his veto threat and signed a housing bill that offers a federal bailout to the lenders and borrowers who helped inflate the housing bubble and now find themselves struggling to stay afloat. The near-collapse of government-sponsored mortgage buyers Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac forced the president's hand, as it led his Treasury secretary, Hank Paulson, to push hard for the authority to rescue the giants if need be. The bill's sole redeeming aspect is that it creates a new regulator for Fannie and Freddie that would have the power to take over the companies if it finds that they have taken on too much risk. Now that Fannie and Freddie's risk is explicitly socialized, it is dangerous to allow them to go on operating as quasi-private entities. They should be nationalized, broken up, and sold to private-sector firms.

Endorsement?
(See page 16)

■ McCain knows whom to blame for the subprime-lending crisis, and he has found him just where Frank Capra would have told him to look. "Wall Street is the villain," he told George Stephanopoulos. Well, well. The Federal Reserve, and Congress's bastard children Fannie and Freddie (acknowledged via the bailout, though hardly legitimized), held a party, lowering interest rates and guaranteeing mortgages. Wall Street came, as Wall Street always will where there is money to be made. Leave this kind of populist blame-shifting to John Edwards, to whom it comes naturally.

■ McCain says young people should be allowed to invest some of their Social Security funds, and he wants a bipartisan group to figure out how to make the program solvent. Earlier, he said that taxing young people to pay for today's retirees without being able to finance their own future retirements is a "disgrace." Democrats pounced on this "gaffe" and said that McCain was tying himself to Bush's discredited plan to "privatize" Social Security. Actually, polls show that letting people invest some of their payroll taxes for themselves remains pretty popular. The bigger problem for McCain is that he is musing about being willing to talk about raising payroll taxes. The Democrats have shown no interest in negotiating, especially on the matter of personal accounts. McCain is negotiating with himself—never a good idea, least of all in the middle of an election.

■ With gas at $4 a gallon, plenty of people are announcing that they have the scheme to save us further pain. That Al Gore is one of them comes as no surprise; nor does the fact that his plan to move America completely to renewable energy within ten years would throw America's energy industry into turmoil. Less expected was the arrival of T. Boone Pickens on the scene. His plan is to increase our use of wind energy, so that all the natural gas currently used to generate electricity could power cars and trucks instead. At least, unlike Al Gore, Pickens is doing something—building a 4,000-megawatt wind plant in Texas. But the subsidies he is getting and the new $5 billion transmission line that is being built to help get the wind power to the customers—paid for mostly by a levy on his competitors—suggest that the "Company Hunter" has become a corporate-welfare hunter.

■ Federal Reserve Board chairman Ben Bernanke talked tough about inflation during his two-day testimony before Congress, but his expressions of doubt about the economy indicated that he thinks it's still too early to raise interest rates. We hope we're reading him wrong. The Fed cut rates too precipitately over the past year, and a move in the other direction is long overdue. Bernanke also outlined a more assertive role for the Fed in the oversight of investment banks. That authority, unfortunately, is inseparable from the assumption that the

ROMAN GENN

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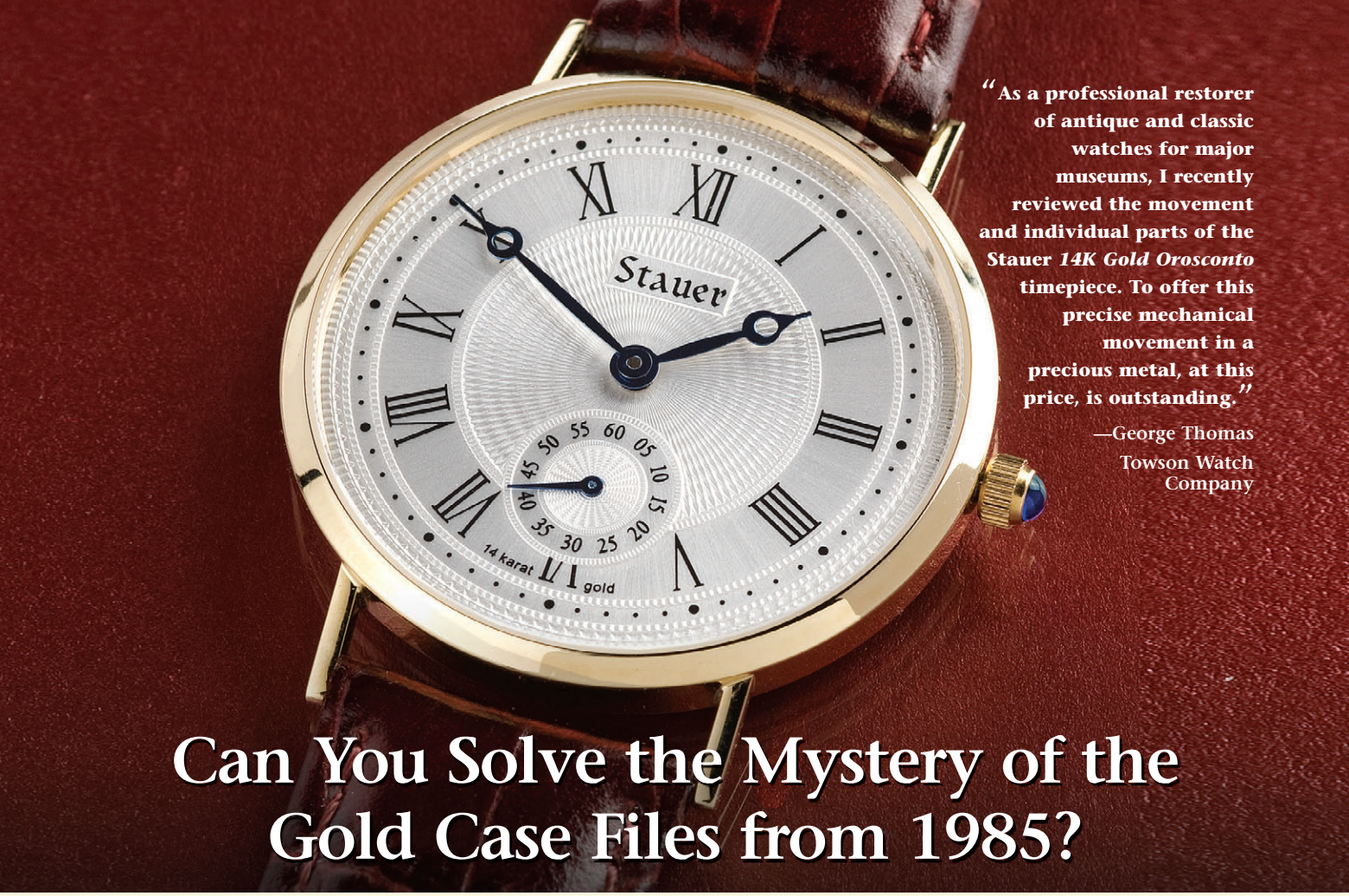

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—George Thomas
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The Week...

Fed will bail out any investment banks that get into trouble, just as it bailed out Bear Stearns in March. The country would be much better served if, instead of finding new missions for the Fed, Bernanke focused on its core mission of protecting the value of our currency.

■ Let's see if we've got this straight: Nancy Pelosi and the Democrats want to enact another "economic-stimulus package," yet they remain opposed to long-term tax relief, they're opposed to cutting the business-tax rate, they're opposed to drilling for new domestic sources of oil, they're against the idea of pursuing market-opening trade agreements, and their party's nominee wants to raise rather than lower taxes on small businesses as soon as he gets into office. With all those options off the table, what's left? Tax-rebate checks, unfortunately—another $30 billion worth. This would be in addition to the $100 billion of tax-rebate checks in the last stimulus package, which the Treasury Department just finished sending out yet. Another round of rebate checks will not do much to bolster the economy, but we doubt that's its true purpose. Instead, it appears to be a classic bait-and-switch: The Democrats will tempt voters with a pre-election tax rebate and then raise taxes after the election. We'll take the rebate checks, of course, but we won't be fooled, and we hope the voting public won't be either.

■ Barack Obama took note of our cover story about his wife ("Mrs. Obama's America," April 21), citing it, in an interview with *Glamour*, as an instance of "the erosion of civility in our political culture." Innocent bystanders are not fair game; hence the young children of candidates are off-limits, as were spouses in the days when they were silent (Mamie Eisenhower) or ornamental (Jackie Kennedy). But Michelle Obama has been on the hustings, proclaiming her pride in her husband and, at moments, her contingent pride in her country (which she has become proud of only now that he may be chosen to lead it). She is a legitimate topic of discussion, and will be so for four years should he win. If he doesn't like that, he needs more seasoning, in the Senate, or perhaps the Illinois legislature.

■ The *New York Times* published an op-ed on Iraq by Barack Obama. John McCain's staff drafted a detailed reply and sent

Drill, Don't Redistribute

Over the past two months, consumer sentiment has ebbed to its lowest level in almost 30 years. The drop is at odds with much of the data—economists now believe, for example, that economic growth in the second quarter was around 2 percentage points, hardly a cause for deep melancholy. The unemployment rate hovers around 5.5 percent, about its post-war average.

What explains this low morale in a moderate economy? Democrats and Barack Obama offer a populist story: While the economy as a whole has not done that poorly during the Bush years, the little guy has fallen farther and farther behind. Americans yearn, the story goes, for massive redistribution.

The accompanying chart suggests a stark and simple alternative story: High gasoline prices are killing the national mood.

The chart begins in January 2004, and plots the price of gasoline against consumer sentiment. Since the relationship is an inverse one—high gasoline prices lead to lower sentiment—the right-hand scale is inverted. Back in 2004, the gasoline price was around $1.75 a gallon, and consumer sentiment was soaring. Over the next four years, the gasoline price jumped to almost $4.25, and sentiment dropped to its lowest level since Jimmy Carter was in the White House.

If high oil prices are really behind the low sentiment, then it is hard to imagine which Republican policy is to blame. Oil and gasoline prices, are, after all, mostly set in world markets.

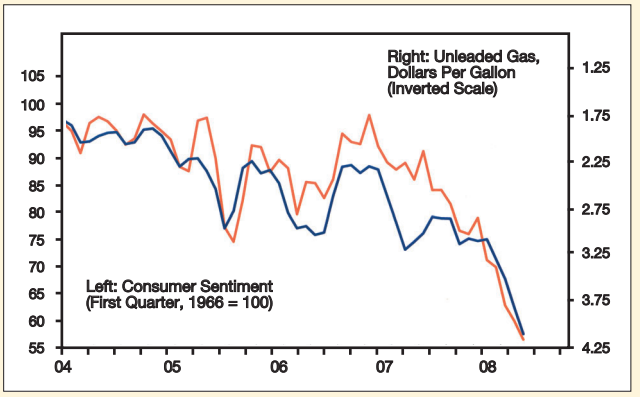
This makes Obama's solution a puzzling one: Tax hikes on the rich will not reduce gasoline prices. Oil exploration, anathema to the Democrats, is the best way to accomplish that.

The huge effect of gasoline on sentiment is something of a puzzle. Gasoline made up only about 3.5 percent of the average U.S. consumer budget in 2006, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Higher prices have certainly pushed that number upward, but gasoline continues to be a tiny fraction of overall spending.

Americans probably respond more to gasoline prices because tanking up is a uniquely painful experience. One stands at the pump and watches the bill increase, dollar by dollar.

Angry voters have historically been a rational lot. Given the magnitude of the gasoline effect, it is hard to imagine they won't vote next November for the candidate who offers the best plan to reduce gasoline prices.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



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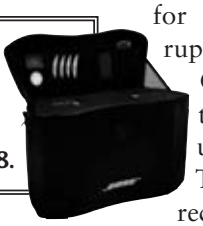

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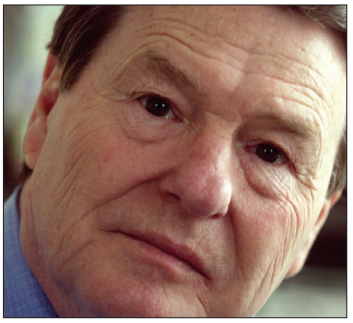
The Week...

it to the *Times*, which demanded that it be revised to "mirror Senator Obama's piece." Although that piece was the usual Obama fog machine ("I would consult with commanders on the ground and the Iraqi government. . . . We would pursue a diplomatic offensive"), the *Times*'s op-ed editor (David Shipley, a former speechwriter for Bill Clinton) demanded that McCain specify "troop levels, timetables and measures for compelling the Iraqis to cooperate." And while Obama had barely mentioned Afghanistan, Shipley ordered McCain's aides to "describe the senator's Afghanistan strategy, spelling out how it meshes with his Iraq plan." Good thing "fair and balanced" isn't the *Times*'s slogan.



■ PBS anchor Jim Lehrer told MarketWatch.com that he doesn't think the press leans on the side of Barack Obama. "There's an ebb and a flow to the news, and it will dictate how much news coverage there is going to be. The word 'bias' does not sit with me." Lehrer is a sensible man, and the fact that he doesn't see bias shows how down-by-the-drainpipe-deep in the tank the media are for Obama. At least the comedy shows are finally acknowledging it. Jon Stewart ran a sketch about the sensations that reporters (male) feel for their man. It's a fine state of affairs when even-handedness is left to dirty jokes.

■ Ward Connerly is trying to put an initiative on Arizona's ballot to ban racial preferences in state contracting, employment, and university admissions. McCain has endorsed it, while Obama has called Connerly's efforts "divisive" and said they are "too often designed to drive a wedge between people" rather than "to solve a big problem." Divisive? In every state that has voted on an initiative against preferences, Connerly has carried the day by a healthy margin. How big a problem racial preferences are depends on how you view the downgrading of merit, the codifying of unfairness, and the divisions that the preferences themselves engender. We suspect that what Obama most dislikes about Connerly is the way his initiatives tend to "drive a wedge" between Democratic politicians and the public.

■ The Supreme Court, in the *Boumediene* case, invented a constitutional right for our alien enemies to challenge their detention in federal court. But it did not dictate the rules that would govern those challenges. Attorney general Michael Mukasey asked Congress to fill the breach, just as it prescribes controlling rules in civilian cases. Democrats appear content to let the courts, instead, make up the rules as they go along. But if left to their own devices, Mukasey argued, judges will turn the battlefield into *CSI Kandahar*. Our soldiers' lives and missions depend on their not being forced to perform such police duties as in-court testimony, *Miranda* warnings, evidence preservation, report writing, and the like. Mukasey also stressed that *Boumediene* affected only detention decisions, not military-commission trials for war crimes. So far, the courts agree. Thus, the trial of Salim Hamdan, Osama bin Laden's chauffeur and confidant, is finally underway. The best way to evaluate commission trials is to hold them—and not to rely on star-chamber hypotheses offered by the enemy's enablers.

■ When the Supreme Court handed down *District of Columbia* v. *Heller* in June, it looked like curtains for the capital's draconian gun laws. But not so fast: The Court forbade the city only to ban "handguns." Recently D.C. decided to get around this by allowing revolvers but banning all guns capable of accepting magazines—that is, semiautomatic handguns, which are some of the most common weapons in America. It is unlikely this move will pass judicial scrutiny; after all, the majority opinion in *Heller* justified striking down the handgun ban in part because it prohibited "an entire class of 'arms' that is overwhelmingly chosen by American society for [self-defense]." This reasoning applies just as easily to the semiautomatic subcategory of handguns. The city is flagrantly disobeying the Court's direction and inviting another lawsuit—all for a gun-control measure that's almost guaranteed not to prevent crime.

■ One state chapter of the ACLU is bucking the national organization on guns: "The ACLU of Nevada will defend this right as it defends other constitutional rights." With extremism and frivolous lawsuits? But it is nice to see an exception to the rule that the constitutional rights the ACLU cares about least are the ones that are in the Constitution.

■ The 1972 federal law popularly known as Title IX forbids sexual discrimination "under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title IX is notorious for its effects—or, rather, the effects of its politicized misinterpretation—on college sports programs, but the wording of the law by no means restricts its application to athletics. The law also encompasses, for example, math and science classes. If a college physics program has only 20 percent female enrollment, what is that if not discrimination? The National Science Foundation and various other government agencies are now conducting compliance reviews at our top universities with a view to stamping out sex bias in math and science. Will the National Endowment for the Humanities be conducting similar inquiries in respect of art-history classes, which are frequently more than 80 percent female? If not, why not?

■ General Motors is not too big to fail: It's just the right size. Even as rival Honda reports a sweet little 8 percent bump in quarterly profits, the big American automakers are foundering under the burden of expensive health-care and retirement commitments, the long tail of several generations' worth of extortionate contracts with the United Auto Workers. U.S. automakers are also suffering from poor management: GM and

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The Week...

Ford have responded glacially to consumers' desire for more fuel-efficient vehicles, and those $100 fill-ups aren't doing anything at all for Hummer sales. There is quiet talk of a bailout. Senator McCain has said that he does not favor such a move but has not categorically ruled out the possibility; Senator Obama has emitted his usual valley-mist of obfuscation, although he has demanded that U.S. taxpayers guarantee billions of dollars in loans to help Ford and GM retool their factories. (What part of the Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac fiasco made creating *more* taxpayer-backed loans for badly managed businesses look like a good idea?) If Congress feels compelled to act, it shouldn't write GM a blank check. Instead, it should reform the legislation that has forced GM into a 50-year death-waltz with Big Labor. The UAW isn't too big to fail, either.

■ Some people, Senate majority leader Harry Reid says, "you cannot negotiate with." Terrorists? No: Tom Coburn, the conservative Republican from Oklahoma. Coburn has blocked action on 35 bills creating 36 new government programs, and costing $10 billion over five years. Coburn is not opposed to creating new programs—so long as old ones are abolished rather than duplicated. He has identified, for Reid, $45 billion in possible savings. Instead of working with Coburn, Reid put all the bills into one package in an attempt to steamroll over him. Republicans stood with Coburn and Reid failed. We sympathize with Reid: From his perspective, a senator who looks out for taxpayers must seem a dangerous right-wing fanatic.

■ One of Alaska senator Ted Stevens's most memorable moments in the last few years came during the Senate fight over the infamous "Bridge to Nowhere." In 2005, when Senator Coburn introduced a measure that would have redirected the money Stevens had earmarked for the bridge to hurricane-ravaged New Orleans, Stevens gave an apoplectic speech on the Senate floor in which he threatened to resign if the Senate passed the measure. It was thus a double loss for the nation when the Senate voted Coburn's proposal down. Now that a grand jury has indicted Stevens on seven counts of making false statements, it is time for him to make good on his threat. Stevens is of course presumed innocent of lying on his financial-disclosure forms until proven guilty, but by now there is no doubt that he received substantial favors from the oil-field-services firm VECO Corp., and that he used his influence to help the company. His behavior was unethical, even if it wasn't illegal. He should go, and the sooner the better.

■ Among national leaders who have chosen not to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics is Mirek Topolánek, the prime minister of the Czech Republic. A few days ago, however, he said at a news conference that he would make a less formal visit to the games in support of Czech competitors. So far, barely newsworthy, but . . . what was that lapel pin Mr. Topolánek was wearing at the news conference? *A Tibetan flag?* The Chinese authorities are seriously upset. Does the Czech government not know, as the whole world knows, that Tibet has been an inseparable part of China since the Jurassic Epoch? China's ambassador in Prague made an indignant protest; the Czech ambassador in Peking was ordered to perform ritual kowtows. No doubt the Czechs were told, as is usual in such cases, that "the feelings of the Chinese people have been hurt." Poor things! Still, having your feelings hurt is probably easier to bear than having your country occupied by a much larger neighboring Communist power, a misfortune in which the Czechs are well placed to sympathize with the Tibetans.

AFP

■ These past 13 years, everyone has been looking for Radovan Karadzic. He was one of the criminal figureheads of Serb nationalism, responsible for atrocities not seen in Europe since World War II: the shelling of cities, concentration camps, massacres. When the United States put a stop to this madness, a warrant was out for his arrest, and the search began at home and abroad. Apparently he'd gone underground for good. Boris Tadic, the president of Serbia, has made membership of the European Union a central policy, but the EU has been practicing a little coercion: no admission until Karadzic is handed over. Lo and behold, Tadic's secret service has suddenly managed to arrest him. Disguised by a fake identity and lots of hair, he had been living pretty openly, making a living by practicing alternative medicine. Following the precedent of Saddam Hussein, he ought to be tried in his own country, so that Serbs have the opportunity to come to terms with crimes committed in their name. No chance. Instead, one of the special tribunals of the International Criminal Court at The Hague is to try Karadzic. If other cases there are anything to go by, this is likely to prove a long-drawn and inconclusive fiasco.

■ Zimbabwe's currency has long been literally worth less than the paper it's printed on. The government's need for more bills has presumably been good business for German printers Giesecke & Devrient, who briskly airlifted shipments of fresh banknotes from their presses to Harare until shamed into stopping by Angela Merkel. Those rapid deployments were necessitated by the tailspin of the Zimbabwean dollar—a Coke cost 15 billion Zim-bucks at last check, and the largest note in circulation, the 100-billion-dollar bill, will not purchase a loaf of bread. Giesecke & Devrient has been down this road before; the family business printed similarly doomed banknotes for the Weimar Republic, as well as the tickets for Hitler's Olympics in 1936. Zimbabwe cannot afford to set up its own printing operation or even to produce the necessary paper; it hasn't enough water to supply a paper mill. Giesecke & Devrient deflects criticism by noting that the U.N. has not imposed financial sanctions on Zimbabwe. Why should mere printers enforce judgments while the "international community" stands by? The question, while self-serving, has a certain sting. Zimbabwe's recent fraudulent election stands, opposition leader Morgan

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Results not typical.

Lack Of Sleep Impacts 1 In 6 Adults

The National Sleep Foundation's Sleep in America polls reveal that over a six year period only about half of adults get a good night's sleep every night. Sleep deficit is frequently related to too much caffeine, nicotine and alcohol. It is also related to stress, long hours at work, night shifts and working on home computers before going to sleep.

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RestAid® utilizes a Patented Cysteine Milk Peptide® that is clinically proven to break down natural stimulants, toxic substances, alcohol and caffeine – all known to interrupt your sleep cycles. Its delivery system gets the nutrients into the blood stream much quicker than other supplements.

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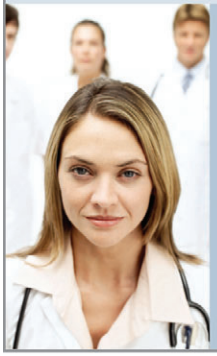
RestAid™ contains the perfect combination of Cysteine Milk Peptide® and Melatonin. Cysteine Milk Peptide® counteracts toxins, stimulants and alcohol which disrupt sleep patterns and Melatonin works naturally to synchronize your body's sleep rhythm.



Cysteine Milk Peptide® – Shown in clinical studies to immediately boost levels of Glutathione, which is a substance produced by the body that is needed to break down toxins such as caffeine and alcohol that disrupt our natural sleep patterns.

Melatonin – is a hormone produced by the body that naturally increases sleep efficiency.

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The Week...

Tsvangirai had little choice but to leave the country, and many of his supporters are today dead or under torture. Robert Mugabe continues his tyrannical rule, and, other than the laws of economics, no credible force acts to constrain him.

■ Egyptian officials get very huffy when you describe the Egyptian government as a dictatorship, even a "presidential dictatorship." They will be equally huffy if you say that Egypt is a "police state." Of late, the Egyptians have been arresting bloggers and users of Facebook. They pretend that these people are "threats to national security." Actually, they are trying to express themselves, as though they lived in a free country. Which, obviously, they do not.

■ Lopez Lomong was one of Sudan's "lost boys." Britain's *Guardian* newspaper has told his story: When he was six, he was one of about 50 boys snatched from church—snatched by Sudanese militants. Before long, he and some older boys escaped from them. They wandered into Kenya, where Lopez spent ten years in a refugee camp. Eventually, he got a ticket to America: "The U.S. was next to heaven." A family in upstate New York took him in. Last year, he was reunited with his birth parents, for the first time: Presuming him dead, they had made a grave for him, burying some of his possessions. Together, the three of them dug them up. In Beijing, Lopez will compete on the U.S. Olympic team, running the 1,500 meters. "I'm just like any American now, with my rights," he says. "Now, I'm not like one of the lost boys. I'm an American."

■ The founder of our magazine, William F. Buckley Jr., hardly ever wanted America to imitate Europe. Still, as an oenophile, he would have been pleased to hear that, by some estimates, the United States will surpass France this year to become the world's leading consumer of wine. (That's going by total consumption; the French still easily outdistance us per capita.) Is America's growing fondness for Chardonnay a positive sign for Barack Obama and his highly refined admirers? Perhaps. Yet Americans drink ten gallons of beer for every one of wine, and as Hillary Clinton recently showed, there's still plenty of voter appeal in the old shot-and-a-brewski. Wine may predominate at faculty clubs and in Northern California, but in places where ballpark vendors do not hawk Cabernet Sauvignon, America is still a beer-drinking nation. That can only be promising for John McCain—whose wife, Cindy, is chairman of one the nation's biggest Anheuser-Busch distributors.

■ During the upcoming Democratic convention, homeless residents of Denver will be given bus tokens as well as tickets to movies, the zoo, and museums—all located at conveniently great distance from the convention center. The plan is voluntary, but what beggar would forgo an opportunity to benefit from the Democrats' famous generosity to the poor . . . Oh, wait, they'd be spending their own money. Never mind. But here's the best part: According to the *New York Post*, big-screen TVs will be set up in outlying shelters to let the displaced homeless "watch the convention and stay informed about the issues being discussed." From a safe distance.

■ San Francisco liberals are amusing themselves: They have proposed to name a sewage plant after George W. Bush. Their proposal is on the November ballot. This is appropriate, because conservatives specialize in cleaning up the messes of liberals.

■ It can be hard to retire, especially for politicians who have tasted power. Happily, Rep. Charles Rangel (D., N.Y.) has just the career lined up when that time comes: real-estate broker. Granted, he will not be a chirpy young thing, like most of the folks who show apartments in New York City. But look at his skills. The *New York Times* recently discovered that Rangel rents four rent-stabilized apartments in Lenox Terrace, a luxury development in his Harlem district. He lives in three, which have been rolled into one, and keeps an office in the fourth. Stabilized apartments, whose prices are held below market value by New York's arcane rent laws, are rare as hen's teeth—but Rangel told reporters that he "didn't even know" he had a deal on his hands. The man must just be a natural. It's the kind of thing some sourpuss of an opponent might make an issue of, if Rangel were not regularly reelected with 90 percent of the vote.

■ Al Sharpton has fastened on one of the nastiest and least-known aspects of the Cuban regime, and good for him. Late last month he stood outside the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York City and spoke about Oscar Biscet and Jorge Luis García Pérez (a.k.a. Antúnez), two political prisoners. Biscet is in jail for 25 years; Antúnez just finished serving 17, though thugs still harass him now that he is out. Biscet and Antúnez are black. Race was a factor in Fidel Castro's rise to power (Batista, the dictator he replaced, was dark-skinned), and black Cubans have been suffering disproportionately ever since. Our guess: The Cubans won't be as welcoming next time Sharpton visits as they were on earlier occasions, when he came to praise them.

■ There are a few things in this world that truly live up to their reputations for excellence: a .44 Magnum, a convertible Ferrari, Pavarotti hitting a high C, the United States Marine Corps. Also Rush Limbaugh, who is now celebrating his 20th year of "Excellence in Broadcasting." Rush's career and life have been full of high drama and unexpected turns, but his listeners know that, when they hear that Pretenders bass line, three hours of the best talk radio there is will follow. A great friend of this magazine, Rush puts the biggest megaphone in political commentary at the service of the ideas that make

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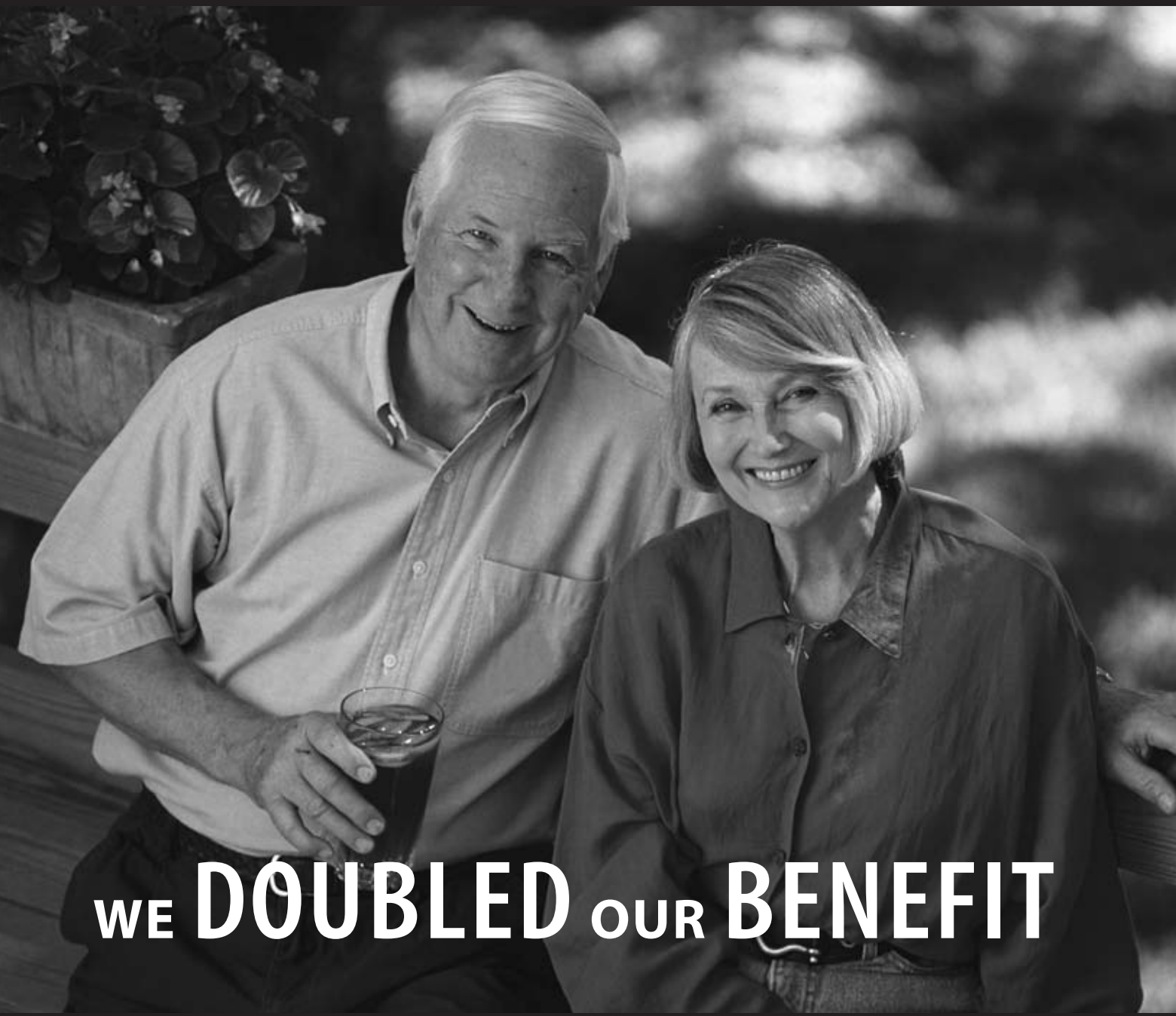

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The Week...

America great—and it's his commitment to ideas, rather than to party or candidates, that makes him invaluable. Some listeners mistakenly believe that Rush is kidding when he boasts of operating behind a golden microphone. He's not, and truth be told it ought to be platinum. Here's to you, Rush, and to the next 20.

■ One of the leading scientific conundrums of our time is the Great Silence—the utter absence of any sign of intelligent life beyond our own planet. In our present, admittedly incomplete, state of knowledge, intelligent life should not be an extraordinary phenomenon in such a big universe. So where are they? Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to walk on the moon, and co-holder (with Alan Shepard) of the record (nine hours) for the longest time spent exploring the moon's surface, says he knows. "We have been visited on this planet, and the UFO phenomenon is real," Mitchell told a British radio station, "although it's been covered up by our governments for quite a long time." Hard to know which is the greater naïveté here: to believe in the endlessly exposed UFO hoax, or in the ability of any government to keep anything secret for 60 years.

■ A factional battle involving as many as 300 combatants left several injured but resulted in no fatalities. Not in Fallujah, but at the Triangle Town Center, a shopping mall in Raleigh, N.C. The fighters were members of rival gangs fighting about . . . whatever morons fight about. Time for a surge at the mall?

■ The fashion among certain young males is to wear pants low and baggy, with colorful underwear on display. This proved too much for the village leaders of Lynwood, Ill., who just passed an ordinance to levy a $25 fine on anyone showing three inches or more of their nether garments in public. The Associated Press quotes one young adult unhappy with the law as saying that it infringes on matters of personal style, and that "leaders should instead spend money on making the area look nicer." Isn't that the whole point?

■ Bob Novak, the renowned conservative columnist, has a brain tumor. That's the bad news. The good news: There's no one tougher. We wish him a speedy recovery.

■ The Rev. Kevin P. Fitzpatrick, S.T.D., who died suddenly on July 20 at the age of 52, was one of the most important people in Bill Buckley's life from the late 1980s until February 27, 2008, the day Bill died. Of course, there are many accomplished and worldly personages who claim an exalted place in that crowded constellation. But Kevin Fitzpatrick—invariably

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called "Padre" by WFB—occupied a unique spot. Almost every weekend that Bill was at home in Stamford—only grave illness or unmovable exigency could alter the routine—the padre would travel the better part of an hour to come to lunch on Saturday. He would return late Sunday afternoon to say the old Latin Mass for Bill and two or three friends at the chapel of his parish church. This had two irresistible attractions for Bill. One was liturgical orthodoxy: There was no hand-holding or other new-age accommodation in the padre's celebration. And then there was brevity: Introit to final prayers, the Mass took between 27 and 34 minutes. Complementing these sacerdotal benefactions were more pedestrian attractions: the padre's intelligent conservatism, his astringent humor, his discriminating fellowship. He was an ornament to the priesthood, and a dear friend. R.I.P.

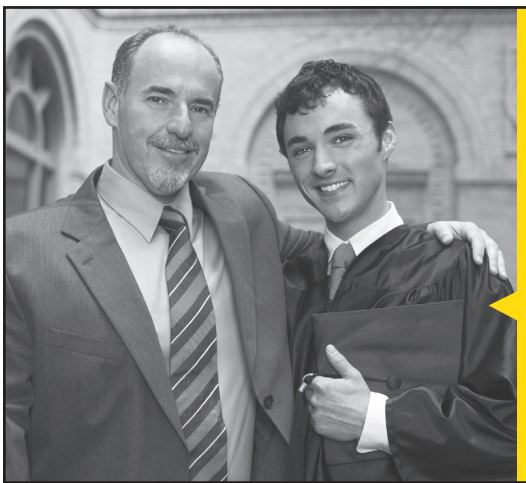
2008

Citizen Obama

BARACK OBAMA'S Berlin speech was compared, by journalists, and by the candidate himself in the very act of choosing to make it, to John Kennedy's declaration that he too was a Berliner, and Ronald Reagan's challenge to Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall. That was audacity. No office seeker could hope to match two presidents speaking at crisis points of their respective administrations, and of the Cold War. What Obama gave instead was a stump speech, delivered with characteristic panache, and using his cheering Germans as a prop: See, I know more than the South Side of Chicago and the inside of the Senate.

Much of what Obama said was standard American policy, often of a kind that conservatives could endorse. He praised NATO and free trade. He urged America and Europe to tell Iran that it "must" abandon its nuclear ambitions, and he warned Putin that we will "work with Russia when we can" but "stand up for our values when we must." As bluntly as politeness allowed, he said Germany had to do more in Afghanistan: "The Afghan people need our troops and your troops . . . to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaeda." He vowed to "defeat terror and dry up the well of extremism that supports it"—words that might have been cribbed from the White House speech shop.

Where he was wrong, he was sometimes wrong along with all recent American policymakers ("we need a strong European Union"). He pledged to "reduce the carbon we send into our atmosphere," without saying how or at what cost. He tossed bits of chum to liberals abroad and at home, urging all nations to "reject torture and stand for the rule of law"—thereby tacitly asserting that America has done the



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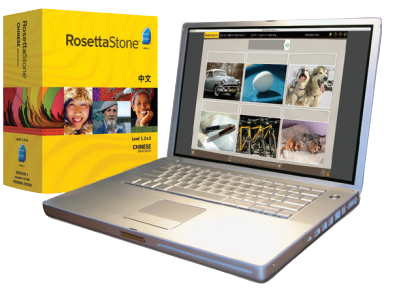

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reverse—and promising to "welcome immigrants from different lands" (there at least he agrees with John McCain).

The speech was light on specifics, heavy on rhetoric. But rhetoric is important because it lays down markers, and one of Obama's big ones is worrisome. He opened by declaring himself to be "a proud citizen of the United States, and a fellow citizen of the world." Later, he returned to the point, speaking of "the burdens of global citizenship" which will "continue to bind us together." But Obama is running for president of the United States, not president of the world. *Ich bin ein* what?

The distinction is worth making at a time when there is a lot of low-grade rogue internationalism running about. Some American judges cite foreign law in domestic cases; international bodies of all sorts seek to chip away at sovereignty. Americans, especially our founders, have always heeded the laws of nature, which are universal. But the political forum for acknowledging and upholding them is the nation-state. Nations can bind our interests and our affections to our duties. No better means has been found.

Obama's globalism risks shortchanging his audience by taking on too much. His concluding roll call of problems sounded like items on a cable-news crawl: Bangladesh, Chad, Burma, Darfur, Iranian bloggers, Zimbabwean voters. As it happens, America can help with aspects of many of these suffering situations. But to take on all of them, and all the others that these imply, would be endless, therefore utopian.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, said another Speaker. We have quite enough on our plate as it is—as Obama will soon discover, should he ever have the responsibility of dealing with it.

AT WAR

Leaving in Peace

THE highlight of Barack Obama's overseas tour was the seeming endorsement he got of his call for a withdrawal from Iraq within 16 months from none other than Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki. The Iraqi told the German magazine *Der Spiegel* that he wants U.S. troops out "as soon as possible," elaborating that "U.S. presidential candidate Barack Obama talks about 16 months. That, we think, would be the right timeframe for a withdrawal, with the possibility of slight changes."

This was widely interpreted as a seal of approval of Obama's Iraq policy by the man best positioned to know. Politically, the episode will no doubt help Obama rebut criticisms of his proposed withdrawal. But Maliki's statements can't be taken at face value. He was playing to a domestic Iraqi audience that he wants to impress with his independence from the Americans. Much of the rest of the Iraqi government was appalled by what Maliki said, and a spokesman tried to walk it back. Maliki has a history of overstating the Iraqi army's capabilities, and it's worth remembering that President Bush had to bludgeon him into accepting the U.S. troop surge that saved his country. In any case, Maliki didn't endorse the no-conditions 16-month withdrawal on which Obama is insisting.

Or is he? At times Obama speaks as though his deadline were hard and fast, at others as if it were hardly a deadline at all. In an interview with *Newsweek*, he refused to specify how large the so-called residual force he wants to leave in Iraq would be, saying it is impossible to see into the future and that the number must be based on conditions at the time. Of course, the exact same things can be said—and should be said—about his plan for withdrawal.

The mainstream media have roughed up McCain for saying that Obama would 'lose a war in order to win a political campaign.' But all the evidence suggests he's right.

No one wants to leave 15 combat brigades in Iraq forever, and the Iraqi and U.S. governments agree that they should depart as security permits (hence the agreement on an aspirational "time horizon" for withdrawal). But to pull them out without regard to conditions—and in pursuit only of the goal of ending the war, as Obama often promises, and not winning it—is so reckless and strategically shortsighted that it can be driven only by ideology or politics.

The mainstream media have roughed up McCain for saying that Obama would "lose a war in order to win a political campaign." But all the evidence suggests he's right. Obama's legislation for a withdrawal of all U.S. combat troops by March 2008 would have handed both Iran and al-Qaeda in Iraq an enormous victory. Obama had resisted offering any firm deadline for withdrawal—until his presidential campaign got underway and he desperately needed to stay to Hillary Clinton's left on the war. Throughout the primary campaign he has tried to avoid saying anything favorable about the surge, even as it beat back America's enemies in Iraq, because he knew it was anathema to much of his party's base. Even now he refuses to say he was wrong about the surge.

Just how wrong he was has slowly seeped into the journalistic and political consciousness. Facts can be denied or ignored for only so long. The Associated Press recently ran a piece titled "U.S. Now Winning Iraq War That Seemed Lost." Attacks have come down to 25–30 a day, from 160–170 a year ago, and in late July there had been six U.S. combat deaths during the month, according to *USA Today* (May 2003, the month following the invasion, has held the record for the lowest number, with eight). Noting that the progress could still be reversed and terrorists can still commit horrific bombings, Gen. David Petraeus told the paper, "I think you are almost approaching a level of normal or latent violence." This near-normalcy would have been unimaginable even six months ago, and impossible had Barack Obama gotten his way.

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■ COVER STORY ■

'Hear Me, Earthlings!'

Citizen Obama addresses the world

JONAH GOLDBERG

THE joke about Pat Buchanan's 1992 Republican National Convention speech was that "it was better in the original German." It's tempting to assume that Barack Obama's Berlin speech was better in the original Esperanto. Speaking near the Brandenburg Gate, Obama proclaimed that he was visiting Berlin not as a politician, but as a "proud citizen of the United States" and—this is the telling part—as a "fellow citizen of the world." (That's *sampatriano de la mondo* in Esperanto, for those interested.) Ronald Reagan used the same phrase, but there are no "citizens of the world." Citizenship requires a state, and unless the United Nations has started issuing passports for all earthlings (can you imagine the lines at the office?), the world has no citizens.

It's tempting to dismiss Obama's Berlin speech as a gassy concatenation of sophomoric platitudes. The trouble is that this vision of world history—and the world's future—wasn't read by a postcolonial-studies major at Ithaca College, from a text illuminated by a lava lamp, with rhetorical flourishes punctuated by bong hits. It was delivered to a throng of some 200,000 adoring, glassy-eyed people by the presumptive presidential nominee of the Democratic party. The Obama campaign billed the speech as a natural continuation of Berlin speeches by JFK and Reagan, two similarly gifted orators who at the time of their own speeches had the added advantage of actually being president, with reason to speak in Berlin more substantial than that they happened to be passing through. Meanwhile, a sycophantic global press corps hyped Obama's speech, before and after, as something akin to an inaugural address from the first President of Planet Earth.

That this was no dorm-room discourse is in one sense a good thing, since Obama's history of the Cold War was not the sort of thing you'd expect from anyone with even a little college history under his belt. In the senator's telling, the Soviet Union was not defeated in a twilight struggle between billions of people; rather, it was defeated by global unity. The lesson of the Berlin Wall's collapse, according to Obama: "There is no challenge too great for a world that stands as one."

This is a bit like saying the lesson of the Crusades has something to do with the redemptive power of interfaith bingo nights. Were the millions of avowed Communists not part of the world? How about the belligerents in Korea and Vietnam, to cite just two of the many proxy wars during that age of global unity? And the billions who formed the Non-Aligned bloc? Or the numerous states that bartered their allegiance with the West and the Soviets—were they part of this global unity? What of the hordes of left-wing activists and agitators here in the United States who blamed America first, last, and always? The Sane Freezers who took to the streets of Berlin to denounce America, not the Soviet Union? How about Obama's friend, former Weatherman terrorist William Ayers? Didn't he plot bombings of American—not Soviet—troops? With unity like this, one shudders to wonder what divisiveness might have looked like.

Obama's blithe revisionism is similar to Bill Clinton's famous claim in 1993 that Americans were unified during the Cold War. "We had an intellectually coherent thing," he effused. "The American people knew what the rules were." Clinton even joked, "Gosh, I miss the Cold War"—because things were so much easier during that time of consensus and unity. This, of course, was the man who described the war in Vietnam as "a war I opposed and despised with a depth of feeling I have reserved solely for racism in America."

But you have to give Bill Clinton some credit. Even in his gauzy fiction, there was still a Cold *War*. It was still America and her allies against an actual enemy, fighting for something. In Obama's telling the Cold War was a universal human endeavor, the whole world united for the sake of unity, hopeful in the cause of . . . hope. We tore down "walls"—real and figurative, or figuratively real—and now the world is threatened again, not by bad people but by those terrible walls. Not real walls, like the barrier that once stood in Berlin, but the even more frightening metaphorical ones.

OBAMA IN BERLIN: MICHAEL GOTTSCHALK/AFP

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"The greatest danger," Obama declared, is not terrorism or global warming or even nuclear war. No, the "greatest danger of all is to allow new walls to divide us from one another." Then he added: "The walls between old allies on either side of the Atlantic cannot stand. The walls between the countries with the most and those with the least cannot stand. The walls between races and tribes, natives and immigrants, Christian and Muslim and Jew cannot stand. These now are the walls we must tear down."

Okay, so: Walls are bad according to Barack Obama. Got it. Of course, when Obama talks of walls, he often sounds like he's really talking about differences—differences between nations, peoples, religions, and their not-always-harmonious interests. But these differences are real. Tear down the walls between Israelis and Palestinians and you won't have peace; you'll have a lot of dead Israelis or dead Palestinians, or both. Dismantle all distinctions between natives and immigrants, and sovereignty—along with real citizenship—evaporates.

When Obama talks of walls, he often sounds like he's really talking about differences—differences between nations, peoples, religions, and their not-always-harmonious interests.

Reagan's universalism was of a different sort, and his argument was that liberty is not a uniquely American possession: "And tonight, we declare anew to our fellow citizens of the world: Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few; it is the universal right of all God's children." Reagan's universalism was a mark of confidence in American values. In Obama's rhetoric, by contrast, you hear a deeply romantic cosmopolitanism: He says the world won't tolerate our eating to our hearts' content and air-conditioning our homes as we please, and argues that we should stop caring whether immigrants learn English and instead make sure our kids learn Spanish. He has agonized like Prufrock ("Do I dare?") over whether to wear a flag pin. His presumptuous and quickly withdrawn mock presidential seal had no room for *E pluribus unum*. He explained to San Francisco fat-cats that rural Americans bitterly "cling" to their bizarre rituals, unnecessary weapons, and ancient sky god, all because they've been left out on globalization. There are many problems with the worldview that these statements bring into focus. Let us concentrate on three.

First, there's what could be called Obama's arrogant Manichaeism. "My rival in this race," he said early in 2007, "is not other candidates. It's cynicism." Cynics are, naturally, those who disagree with Barack Obama. Again and again, he dismisses critics and criticism by castigating "divisiveness." Then there's his slogan "We are the ones we've been waiting for," part of his persistently messianic rhetoric, which seems to suggest that those who are not onboard are not just divisive, but un-anointed: the ones we haven't been waiting for. Obama himself is never "divisive" for disagreeing with people. "Us" are those who rally to Obama the Unifier; "them" are forever the divisive ones. (Perhaps the GOP should adopt the slogan: "We Are the Ones You're Tired Of.") In short, Obama leads the bridge builders in the glorious struggle against the wall builders.

Second, what about those walls? It's not surprising, given how recycled it all sounded to Americans who've been paying attention, that much of Obama's Berlin rhetoric was merely an extension of his obsession with unity for its own sake, as though this were the highest good. But not only is unity between nation-states not the same thing as unity between individuals, unity for its own sake in foreign affairs has led to cataclysmic confrontations (see "World War I"). Moreover, if the "greatest danger" we face is the possibility of "new walls," then the upshot of Obamism is that the War on Terror—or, if it's more your style, a War on Climate Change—must take a backseat to the more pressing War on Walls. Such a foreign policy would entrench the liberal fetish for collective action: Remember John Kerry's "global test"? The overarching principle of Democratic foreign policy seems to be that it's better to be

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wrong in a group than to be right alone.

Third, Obama the Cosmopolitan seems to have a real problem distinguishing between the domestic and international spheres. If in his ideal world there would be no "walls" between foreigners and citizens, between Country A and Country B, then why have anything like nations in the first place? If we're all citizens of the world, what is the point of being a citizen of anyplace else? He speaks not of America's burdens, but of the burdens of global citizenship.

Already, Obama has made it clear that his view of the Constitution is entirely open, and can be molded to whatever conception of justice fires the hearts and illuminates the minds of transnational progressives. He says he agrees "with Justice Breyer's view of the Constitution—that it is not a static but rather a living document, and must be read in the context of an ever-changing world." That's one reason Breyer is the Supreme Court's leading advocate of invoking foreign laws—even foreign polls—to glean the Constitution's latest meaning. Obama has also confessed that his foremost criterion for selecting judges will be that they have "the heart, the empathy, to recognize what it's like to be a young teenage mom, the empathy to understand what it's like to be poor or African-American or gay or disabled or old—and that's the criteria by which I'm going to be selecting my judges." Given such a standard, how difficult would it be to add empathy for fellow citizens of the world who, by no more than an accident of birth, aren't citizens of the United States? (Not too hard, it seems, given Obama's enthusiastic support for granting constitutional rights to foreign terrorists captured abroad and held outside the United States.)

All of this might be defensible, even laudable, if it were the musings of a philosopher describing the best possible world. But we aren't electing a philosopher; we're electing a commander-in-chief who is supposed to be a zealous defender of our nation, our Constitution, and our interests—in the world in which we live. There's nothing wrong, and much that is right, in trying to do good for the rest of that world, in whole or in part. But it would be nice if Obama could make it clear he understands that that's a fringe benefit of being president, not the first line of the job description. **NR**

ROMAN GENN

■ **POLITICS**

The Secret History of John Edwards

Is a scandal a scandal if no one reports it?

BYRON YORK

"We're following the story," says John Drescher, executive editor of the Raleigh, N.C. *News & Observer*. "We're doing our own reporting, and when we think we have a story, we'll put it in the paper, and if we don't get what we think is a story, we won't put it in the paper."

The "it" to which Drescher refers is *the* story on the Internet and a non-story pretty much everywhere else: the tabloid *National Enquirer*'s report that John Edwards, the former Democratic presidential candidate and possible vice president or attorney general in a Democratic administration, has had an affair, and an illegitimate child, with a woman he hired to make videos for his 2008 campaign.

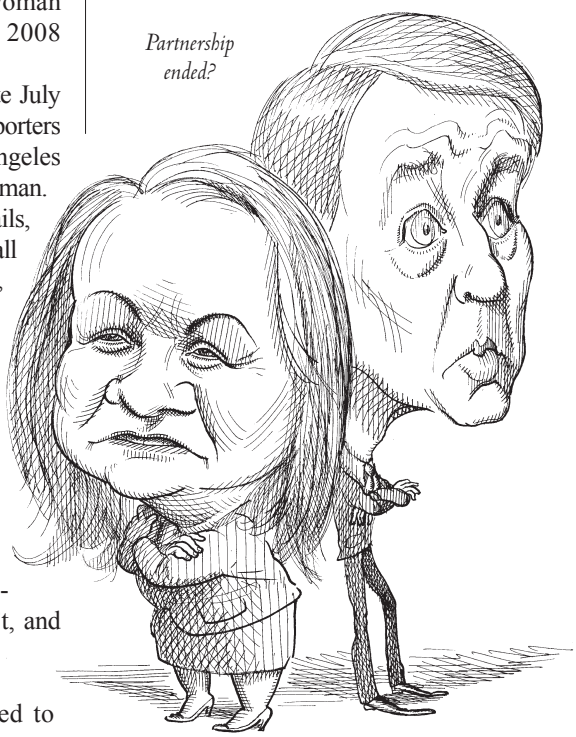
In a story published on its website July 22, the *Enquirer* described how its reporters had cornered Edwards at a Los Angeles hotel where he was visiting the woman. Even though the story had lots of details, and concerned a newsworthy figure, all the big outlets—the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the newsmagazines, the broadcast networks, the cable networks, everybody—ignored it.

That included the *News & Observer*, Edwards's home-state paper, which says it so far hasn't been able to confirm the story on its own. "If we had evidence, we would publish," says Drescher. "But we don't, and we haven't."

The story was uniquely damaging for Edwards, who has pledged to "seriously consider anything, anything [Obama] asks me to do for our country." His partnership with wife Elizabeth, now suffering from inoperable cancer, has been a defining aspect of his career in public life. "Part of his political mythos—a pretty good chunk of it—was Elizabeth Edwards, the relationship between the two people," says John Hood, president of the John Locke Foundation, a North Carolina think tank. "The way they came onto the public stage in North Carolina was after their son's death [Wade, their 16-year-old, was killed in a 1996 auto accident], and their having new children later in life. When he came to the public fore, it was as a member of a family. It wasn't 'great successful trial lawyer,' it was 'grieving dad and husband.' So the family identification for Edwards was critical to his political rise."

Having a mistress and a love child can do serious damage to an image like that.

The mistress story goes back to 2006, when Edwards hired a woman named Rielle Hunter, sometimes described as a filmmaker and sometimes as an aspiring actress, to make behind-the-scenes videos for his campaign website. Hunter and her work attracted little attention until September 2007, when the liberal web publication *Huffington Post* reported that her videos had disappeared, with-



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out explanation, from the Edwards site. "Innocuous Videos Suddenly Shrouded in Secrecy," *HuffPo* announced.

A month later, in October, the *Enquirer* published a thinly sourced story claiming that Edwards had been "caught in a shocking mistress scandal that could wreck his campaign." Edwards flatly denied it. "The story is false," he said. "It's completely untrue, ridiculous. Anyone who knows me knows that I have been in love with the same woman for 30-plus years."

Still later, in December 2007, just before the Iowa caucuses, the *Enquirer* published more details. A pregnant Hunter had moved to North Carolina, and was living in a gated community in a house "owned by an Edwards backer" and driving a BMW registered to a longtime Edwards aide who lived a few doors down with his wife and small children. A lawyer for the aide told the *Enquirer* that the aide, and not Edwards, was the father of Hunter's child.

To more than one reporter reading the story, the whole thing seemed fishy. This guy—the low-level aide—was living with his wife and kids in the same neighborhood as the woman he had just had an affair and a child with, loaning his luxury car to her, authorizing a lawyer to assert his fatherhood, and everybody was just one happy family? Stranger things have happened, and the *Enquirer* didn't have dead-to-rights proof, but it was pretty suggestive.

"I thought they had him there," says one Democratic strategist who followed the campaign closely. "You know when your child brings home a connect-the-dots picture and you can see the animal before you connect the dots? It was one of those things. You didn't need a pencil to see the animal." Nevertheless, no press organization picked up the story, and Edwards made it through the primaries, a loser but scandal-free.

Then the *Enquirer* struck again. Under the headline "Sen. John Edwards Caught with Mistress and Love Child!" the paper reported that Hunter, now with a baby, had moved to southern California, where Edwards visited her at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on the night of July 21. Leaving Hunter's room at 2:40 A.M., Edwards was confronted by a pack of *Enquirer* reporters and photographers hitting him with questions about Hunter and the child. The tabloid said Edwards tried to run away, ducking into a men's room and calling security on his cell phone to help him escape.

A couple of days later, Edwards was asked about the episode during a public appearance. "I don't talk about these tabloids," he said. "They're tabloid trash and full of lies." Asked again the next day, Edwards said he didn't know what the questioner was talking about.

Put it all together and the details, plus Edwards's non-responses, don't look good. But still the press ignored the story. Why?

It was certainly distasteful; if true, it made Edwards seem an incorrigible heel. People in newsrooms, and elsewhere, felt bad for his wife. But on the other hand, he is a recent presidential candidate and current (at least until now) vice-presidential prospect, as well as a potential attorney general, poverty czar, or other high-ranking official in a Democratic administration. A scandal involving him is undoubtedly news.

But there was still no reporting—the *Los Angeles Times* went so far as to bar its bloggers from discussing the issue. Media bias is an obvious explanation, and one that's almost surely correct in part, but it might be more complicated than that. "Republicans want to make it a liberal media conspiracy to protect their boy," says John Hood. "But for [the press], it's more along the lines of 'Do they want to associate themselves with the *National Enquirer*?' It's almost a prissy media-elite reaction, as opposed to a slavishly partisan reaction." (Although, it should be said, that did not keep the press from following up a few years ago when the *Enquirer* broke the news of Rush Limbaugh's drug addiction.)

Whatever the case, John Edwards found himself in what might have been a major scandal, had anyone other than a supermarket tabloid chosen to publish it. But that doesn't mean people don't know the story. Everyone in the political world has been following it on the Internet, and Edwards's chances for a big job in an Obama administration, should there be one, are now probably nil. News gets around, whether the big media boys report it or not. **NR**

■ CONGRESS

The Toughest Fight

Sen. John Sununu's travails in the Granite State

RAMESH PONNURU

DEMOCRATS have a chance this fall to build a majority in the Senate that is effectively filibuster-proof. To do it, they will have to defeat John Sununu, a Republican senator from New Hampshire. Pollster.com's average of polls has Sununu eleven points below his opponent, former governor Jeanne Shaheen. No other Republican incumbent is in worse shape: not Ted Stevens of Alaska, who is mired in scandal; not Roger Wicker of Mississippi, who was appointed to the Senate a few months ago to fill a vacancy. If Democrats cannot beat Sununu, they are unlikely to achieve their goal.

The senator has been in tight spots before. In 1996, he won his party's nomination for a House seat by getting 28 percent of the vote in a field of eight candidates. He was outspent by the Democratic candidate. In 2002, he launched a primary campaign against a sitting Republican senator, the erratic Bob Smith. He was again outspent, and some of the polls were close, but Sununu won. He then faced Shaheen. She outspent him, too, but he beat her by four points. Shaheen argues that it was the national climate a year after 9/11 that beat her; their rematch this year takes place under very different political circumstances.

If she wins, Republicans will have lost one of their most libertarian-minded members. Sununu voted against the Republicans' energy bill, transportation bill, and prescription-drug bill because they spent too much money. He thinks prisoners in the War on Terror should be able to challenge their detention in federal court. He voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment on federalism grounds. He has been a strong advocate of letting people invest

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some of their Social Security funds for themselves. He has tried to keep Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac from being able to take ever-bigger risks with taxpayer money.

Being a small-government conservative in Washington in recent years has meant losing most battles, but not all of them. Sununu succeeded in passing legislation to block taxes on Internet access, for example. He led a fight to make the Patriot Act more protective of civil liberties, joining a filibuster and winning some concessions. Being a small-government conservative has also often meant being at odds with the Bush administration, as his record on many of those issues demonstrates. Sununu was the first Republican senator to call for Alberto Gonzales to step down as attorney general. He bucked the administration, as well, on immigration. When the bipartisan Iraq Study Group issued its recommendations in late 2006, Sununu was notably more receptive to them than the administration, which regarded them as a glorified surrender.

An engineer by training, Sununu is very smart. He is also the youngest senator. But Sununu does not seem to have come across to his colleagues as a know-it-all, notwithstanding some jokes that John McCain makes while campaigning in New Hampshire. In this respect, Sununu's reputation differs markedly from that of his father, who was often faulted for his arrogance. (The elder John Sununu was a brilliant engineer who became New Hampshire's governor, chief of staff to the first President Bush, and a host of *Crossfire*.)

Shaheen's strategy in the Senate race is pretty simple: tie Sununu to an unpopular president, an unpopular war, and unpopular economic conditions. It is the sort of campaign that could be run against just about any Republican in just about any state. She is, in short, hoping that a Democratic tide washes her ashore. The complacence of that strategy offers Sununu some hope.

New Hampshire Democrats take every opportunity to point out that Sununu has voted with President Bush 85 percent of the time—which isn't surprising, considering that he is a Republican. Sununu's comeback: "I vote with New Hampshire 100 percent of the time." He adds, "In 2003, my first year in the United States Senate, Republicans advanced an energy bill that spent too much money, was filled with unnecessary subsidies, and I led the effort to defeat it and we succeeded. I wasn't looking for a fight in my first year in the Senate but it just wasn't a good bill for taxpayers; it wasn't a good bill for the people of New Hampshire. . . . I've never hesitated to vote the interests of New Hampshire whether the legislation was put forward by Republicans or Democrats."

Shaheen herself backed the invasion of Iraq during her 2002 run. Now she says that President Bush misled the country into war. Earlier this year she was reported as complaining that we were "five years into a war we were told would last a matter of weeks." Her own account, taken at face value, makes her sound gullible and unserious. The success of the surge may also have made this issue less effective for Shaheen.

The economy, too, may not work quite as much in Shaheen's favor as she had thought. On gas prices, Sununu's advocacy of more drilling will probably beat her calls for a crackdown on oil companies and speculators. New Hampshire has not been a high-foreclosure state, meanwhile, and Sununu has taken a lead on housing issues. He has been getting more active on health care, too. He supports a large tax credit to help individuals who do not get health insurance through their jobs buy it for themselves. He also thinks that individuals and businesses ought to be able to buy insurance across state lines. (Freeing interstate commerce is something of a theme in Sununu's legislation.)

DARREN GYGI

John Sununu

Sununu dismisses the idea that his state is turning blue. "In 2004, we had two Republican United States Senators, two Republican members of Congress, a Republican governor, a Republican state senate, a Republican house of representatives, [and] five Republican executive councilors." (In New Hampshire, a council shares executive duties with the governor.) "The demographics of New Hampshire [have not] changed radically over the past four years."

But in November 2004, New Hampshire became the only state to vote for John Kerry after having voted for George W. Bush four years earlier—completing a solid bloc of blue that stretched from Maine to Maryland. It also elected a Democratic governor. In 2006, Republicans lost their majorities in the legislature and the executive council, and lost both House seats. Perhaps that was the year that slow change in New Hampshire reached a tipping point.

McCain will be campaigning in New Hampshire, which voted for him in the presidential primaries of 2000 and 2008. That should help Sununu. The senator is also husbanding his resources wisely. Shaheen has been running ads through the summer, while Sununu has kept his money in the bank so that he can deploy it when people are paying attention. The candidates are not yet well defined in people's minds, and Shaheen's lead in the polls may reflect voters' preference for a Democrat over a Republican more than their preference for her over him.

Sununu is unflappable, and he has thought through this campaign. If he does not win reelection, it will be because it was impossible to do this year. **NR**

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■ PUBLIC POLICY

Inside Job

How Fannie and Freddie got away with it

STEPHEN SPRUIELL

For months, President Bush stood by his veto threat. While members of Congress argued over how big the housing bailout should be, the Bush administration took the position that such a bailout was unnecessary and would serve only to reward reckless lenders and borrowers who gambled on home prices during the housing boom and lost. The president's hand was strengthened when *Portfolio* magazine revealed that several of the housing bailout's key sponsors had taken loans at preferential rates from Countrywide Financial, a major beneficiary of the bill.

Then, suddenly, everything changed. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs) tasked with supplying liquidity to the mortgage market, saw their stock prices drop by half over the course of a single week of frantic selling in mid-July. Investors panicked at the thought that the troubled companies would lose their access to cheap credit, which would leave them unable to pay back the trillions of dollars they owe on mortgages and mortgage-backed securities.

Eager to calm the markets and stave off a potentially catastrophic collapse, Treasury secretary Hank Paulson asked Congress for the authority to effectuate a bailout of Fannie and Freddie, making explicit what many investors had long considered the GSEs' implicit government backing. The Democratic leadership in Congress cleverly packaged Paulson's new powers with the broader housing-market bailout Bush had previously opposed. With his own Treasury secretary urging him to support the measure, Bush abandoned his veto threat and decided to sign a bill that essentially doubled the U.S. public debt overnight.

"It was like a bad weekend in Vegas," one wag said of Bush's luck. "One minute he's up, and the next he's looking around like, 'Where'd all the money go?'" Conservatives who cheered Bush's anti-bailout stance are certainly sharing that sense of bewilderment today. To its credit, the Bush administration has consistently called for tighter regulation of the GSEs. Ironically, the housing bill provides it, but at the cost of giving the bloated and teetering GSEs a blank check to cover their past failures. Fannie and Freddie critics are exasperated; even when the GSEs lose, they win.

The government created Fannie Mae during the Great Depression as part of the New Deal. At its inception, the agency was given the task of buying and securing mortgage debt, thus freeing banks to clear mortgages off their books and make more loans. In 1968, Congress decided to take Fannie's debt off *its* books by privatizing the company, but Fannie retained its government charter. In 1970, Congress chartered a second company, Freddie Mac, so that Fannie wouldn't have a monopoly over the secondary mortgage market.

Since that time, Fannie and Freddie have doubled the amount of mortgage debt on their books every five years—from $15 billion in 1970 to nearly $5 trillion today. This astonishing rate of growth was powered by the market's assumption that the government would stand behind Fannie and Freddie if the companies got into trouble. The government's "implicit guarantee" allowed Fannie and Freddie to borrow money at interest rates just slightly higher than the low rates the U.S. Treasury enjoys. With access to cheap credit and low regulatory capital requirements, Fannie and Freddie leveraged themselves to the gills and grew huge. Now that the mortgage market has turned sour, rising defaults have left the giants hovering near the brink of insolvency.

Fannie and Freddie's extraordinary lobbying efforts have enabled them to retain their government benefits while evading restraints that would have prevented such a foolish concentration of risk. The companies spent more than $200 million on lobbying and campaign contributions over the past ten years, ranking them at the top among mortgage-industry givers. They hired well-connected Washington players as executives and lavished them with multi-million-dollar compensation packages. Fannie Mae opened up "Partnership Offices" in various congressional districts, helping members appear deeply involved in affordable-housing issues.

The GSEs' political activities were not limited to lobbying members of Congress. Affordable-housing non-profit groups that criticized Fannie and Freddie dropped their complaints after receiving sizable charitable contributions. Some Wall Street banks chafed at being essentially locked out of the secondary mortgage market, but they kept their concerns quiet over fears that they would lose profitable work selling Fannie and Freddie's mortgage-backed securities. Fannie and Freddie's influence on outside groups helped them gain influence inside Congress: Affordable-housing advocates like Democratic congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts and investor-friendly Democrats like Sen. Chris Dodd of Connecticut and Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York are among Fannie and Freddie's staunchest defenders.

Those whom Fannie and Freddie couldn't influence through generosity quickly found themselves on the receiving end of some nasty smears. In his 2002 book *Government-Sponsored Enterprises: Mercantilist Companies in the Modern World*, Thomas H. Stanton relates the story of former Treasury undersecretary Gary Gensler. In 2000, Gensler testified in support of legislation that would have eliminated the GSEs' line of credit at the Treasury Department (the very line that Paulson successfully sought to expand). When the GSEs' borrowing costs ticked up slightly in response to Gensler's remarks, a Fannie Mae spokesman accused him of depriving more than 200,000 families of the chance to own a home.

Though Fannie Mae would later apologize and retract the outrageous claim, the GSEs have used this tactic numerous times against other critics. When members of Congress voice concerns about the GSEs, their constituents soon start getting letters from Fannie and Freddie warning them that their representative is trying to make mortgages more expensive. This is exactly what happened to Rep. Paul Ryan, a Repub-

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Racism in the Islamic World

How can peace prevail in the Middle East in the face of Islamic bigotry and hate? When will moderate Muslims speak out?

For years, the U.N., led by Islamic and Arab nations and their sympathizers, has accused Israel of racism, but the world consistently turns a blind eye to open, seething anti-Semitism in Islamic society.

What are the facts?

In one of the most astonishing propaganda coups ever, a United Nations conference on racism, which took place in Durban South Africa, declared that Zionism is racism. No wonder the U.S. and Israel walked out of the meeting, which was dominated by representatives of Islamic and Arab states and other anti-Israel forces, and whose conclusions were predictable from the outset.

The supreme irony of this conference was that it accused no other nation of racism—only Israel. In truth, Israel is perhaps the most racially and ethnically diverse and tolerant country in the world. More than half of Israel's Jewish population consists of people of color—blacks from Ethiopia and Yemen, as well as brown-skinned people from Morocco, Iran, Syria, Egypt and Israel itself. In addition, Israel's population includes more than one million Arabs, who enjoy the same civil rights as Jewish Israelis. In Israel hate speech is banned, and it is against the law to discriminate based on race or religion.

In contrast, anti-Semitism—a poisonous form of racism directed specifically against the Jewish people—is rampant in most all Islamic societies. Not only is anti-Semitism commonplace in Muslim nations, but it is propagated shamelessly by their leaders, in state-sponsored media, and by Muslim clergy.

For example, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed declared in a speech to the Organization of Islamic Conference that, "today Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them." Imagine if an American president had made a similarly sweeping and bigoted statement about blacks, Latinos or any other race—what a justifiable uproar, perhaps even an impeachment, would ensue. Yet there was no condemnation by the Muslim world of Mr. Mohamed's comments. Rather, virtually all of the conference's Muslim leaders actually voiced their approval.

In response to a terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia in May 2004, Crown Prince Abdullah declared that "Zionism is behind [these] terrorist actions in the kingdom." (Zionism is the code word often used by Islamic anti-Semites for Jews.) Tom Lantos, the late U.S. Congressman, called the Prince's assertion "an outrage . . . blatant hypocrisy," but Islamic leaders were silent. In fact, millions of Muslims still insist that Zionists were behind the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Anti-Semitism is expressed so freely and ubiquitously in most Islamic societies that no citizen can escape it. During Ramadan in 2002, Egypt's state-controlled TV aired "Horseman Without a Horse," a program based on the notorious forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in which Jews allegedly use the blood of non-Jews to make Passover matzot. In Iran, a TV series, "Zahra's Blue Eyes," portrays "Zionists" kidnapping Palestinian children and harvesting their organs.

> "Until Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force."

Perhaps nowhere is the hatred of Jews more virulent than among the Palestinians. Most perniciously, Palestinian children are taught in school that Jews are descended from apes and pigs and that the most noble thing they can do is to kill Jews. Muslim clerics like Imam Ibrahim Madiras, an employee of the Palestinian Authority, declared in a television sermon, "Jews are a cancer" and later that, "Muslims will kill the Jews . . . [and] rejoice in Allah's victory." No surprise, then, that the 1982 doctoral dissertation of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas makes the astounding claim that "Zionists" collaborated with the Nazis to annihilate the Jewish people in order to drive the survivors to Palestine.

Anti-Semitism and the prospects for peace. Islamic anti-Semitism permeates the Arab Middle East and creates an atmosphere in which Jews are reviled and represented as subhuman. How can the Palestinian people embrace peace with a people represented by their religious and political leaders as dehumanized, evil beings? Even more importantly, how can Israel be expected to trust a so-called peace partner who expresses abject hatred and murderous intent toward Jews on a daily basis? Yet the U.S. and many European nations continue to demand that Israel make one-sided sacrifices for peace with a people steeped in racism and committed to its destruction.

Until Islamic leaders muster the integrity to relentlessly condemn anti-Semitism (and its evil twin, anti-Zionism), we can't expect Israel to accept a forced peace with the Palestinians. Likewise, until moderate Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force among the world's people.

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lican from Wisconsin, according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article in which editorial-page editor Paul Gigot, a longtime critic of the GSEs, pronounced Fannie and Freddie "unique in their thuggery."

Fannie and Freddie's ethical line-skirting doesn't always go unnoticed; in 2006, illegal fundraising activities earned Freddie Mac $3.8 million in fines from the Federal Election Commission. And accounting scandals uncovered at both GSEs in 2004 led to over $10 billion in financial restatements and the resignation of top executives at both companies. But even though Fannie and Freddie's regulator, the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, constrained their activities to some degree in the wake of the scandals, Fannie and Freddie's congressional enablers stalled major legislation that would have created a new regulator for the GSEs with the power to take over the companies and force them to shrink their ballooning portfolios. From the GSEs' point of view, that was $3.8 million well spent.

The mortgage-market blow-up—and Fannie and Freddie's subsequent near-death experience—finally convinced Congress that the GSEs needed a tougher regulator, and one of the few silver linings in the abysmal housing bill is that it creates one. The new Federal Housing Finance Agency would have the power to put Fannie and Freddie into a federal receivership if it finds that the companies are not adequately capitalized. A government takeover with an eye toward downsizing, breaking up, and selling off the GSEs might be the best option for U.S. taxpayers, who now find themselves on the hook for what could turn out to be hundreds of billions of dollars. Breaking up and fully privatizing the GSEs would at least spare taxpayers from future bailouts.

The fear among critics of the GSEs is that even with a tougher regulator, Fannie and Freddie will be able to convert their outsize lobbying abilities into congressional pressure on their regulator to leave them alone. Shortly after Paulson announced his bailout plan, Sen. Jim DeMint, a Republican from South Carolina, pointed out that if Fannie and Freddie were to receive explicit taxpayer backing, then the companies should be treated like any other federal entity and banned from lobbying the federal government.

DeMint proposed an amendment to this effect, but Senate majority leader Harry Reid refused to allow a vote. What's more, a Reid staffer sent an e-mail to a lobbyist listserv warning K Street of DeMint's attempt to ban Fannie and Freddie from lobbying—and offering assurances that Reid would be moving to block DeMint's amendment. This e-mail was bound to get someone's attention; Fannie and Freddie have retained at least 42 lobbying firms this year alone.

Reid won his cloture vote on the bill, ending debate, but that still left DeMint with 30 hours to stymie the bill's progress. "We said, 'Look, everyone can go home if [Reid would] just promise to schedule a vote on Fannie and Freddie lobbying at a later date,'" a DeMint spokesman said. "But they wouldn't even give us that." DeMint kept everyone there for a rare Saturday session, when the bill finally passed 72–13.

President Bush, who once opposed most of the bill's provisions, decided to sign it, citing the creation of a strong new regulator for Fannie and Freddie as evidence that, in essence, the GSEs' party is over. Meanwhile, Fannie and Freddie were sending politicians a very different signal in the form of invitations to a pair of lavish galas they plan to throw at luxurious hotels in Denver and Minneapolis during this year's political conventions. It appears the GSEs will spare no expense to wine and dine the powerbrokers who will ultimately decide whether they can continue to operate a business model under which the profits are private, but the risk is socialized.

Why did DeMint risk angering all of his colleagues over this one amendment? Why wouldn't Reid back down? And where were DeMint's fellow Republicans? The answer to all of these questions is that Fannie and Freddie's extraordinary lobbying efforts have won them powerful allies in Congress and enabled them to evade meaningful oversight for decades. The ease with which these allies were able to thwart DeMint's attempt to rein in Fannie and Freddie perfectly illustrates why he was right to insist that their empire of influence be dismantled. **NR**

■ ENERGY

Wrong Then, Too

Let's not repeat Jimmy Carter's energy mistakes

JERRY TAYLOR

On July 15, 1979, Pres. Jimmy Carter gave a televised address to the nation about America's "crisis of confidence" and how that crisis was feeding "a fundamental threat to American democracy"—reliance on imported oil. It was derided at the time as the "national malaise" speech (Carter never actually used the phrase), and according to legend it was the most politically disastrous speech ever given by a sitting president.

But rehabilitation is in the air. If only we had listened to Jimmy Carter back then, we are increasingly told, we wouldn't be in the energy mess we're in today.

Before we get too deep into this revisionist cup, it is worth looking closer at the policy road supposedly not taken. It turns out that much of what Carter proposed was subsequently adopted, and much of what wasn't was unnecessary.

The first thing President Carter promised was that, "beginning this moment, this nation will never use more foreign oil than we did in 1977 [3.2 billion barrels]—never. From now on, every new addition to our demand for energy will be met from our own production and our own conservation." Oil import volumes indeed stayed below 1977 levels for the next 16 years, but not because of any government policy: Soaring oil prices and a subsequent recession reduced demand for oil. This partially explains why Carter's second promise—to impose oil-import quotas to secure those import reductions—was both unnecessary and (thankfully) quickly forgotten.

But maybe in 1995, when foreign-oil consumption finally surpassed the 1977 benchmark, President Clinton should have

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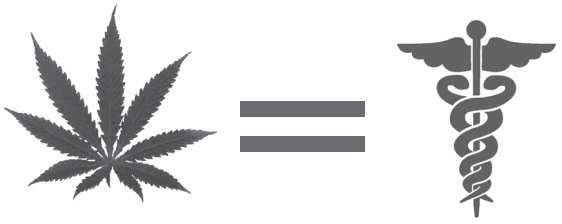
Study of 4000 indicates marijuana discourages use of hard drugs.



A ground-breaking study of 4117 marijuana smokers in California[1] reveals that the 'Gateway Theory' probably had it backwards. Instead of enticing young people to use other drugs, this study suggests that marijuana may have the opposite effect.

This first-ever clinical examination of a large number of medical marijuana applicants depicts a population that is remarkably normal. The percentages earning bachelors' degrees and doctorates are nearly identical to the national numbers. They are, in the main, productive citizens with jobs, homes and families who smoke marijuana weekly or daily – and have in some cases for decades.

For the vast majority of these applicants, their use of cannabis ultimately led to a decrease in the use of tobacco, alcohol, and hard drugs. Asked to compare their current alcohol consumption with their lifetime peak, over 10% claimed to be abstinent and nearly 90% claimed to have cut their drinking in half.

They also report using cannabis as self medication for stress and anxiety – with fewer side effects than the legal pharmaceutical alternatives.

As children, a significant percentage of the male applicants had been treated for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Today their routine morning use of minimal amounts of cannabis strongly suggests that it enhances their ability to concentrate by allowing them to focus on one problem at a time.

As one construction company estimator said, "After two hits and my morning coffee, I'm the best estimator in the company."

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
www.info@csdp.org

[1] Long term marijuana users seeking medical cannabis in California (2001–2007): demographics, social characteristics, patterns of cannabis and other drug use of 4117 applicants. – Thomas J O'Connell and Ché B Bou Matar
http://www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/4/1/16

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imposed these quotas? No. Few remember that President Eisenhower slapped import quotas on oil back in 1959, and they remained in effect until President Nixon repealed them in 1973. According to oil economists Douglas Bohi and Milton Russell, the quotas forced domestic oil prices significantly above global market prices, enriching domestic oil producers at the expense of domestic consumers. Restricting imports forced U.S. fields to produce more crude than would otherwise have been the case (as a consequence, one might tag it a "drain America first" program).

President Carter's third promise was to unleash an avalanche of federal subsidies for synthetic fuels, oil-shale development, ethanol, "unconventional gas," and solar power, all of which were to be paid for by a windfall-profit tax. And Carter mostly got his way—for awhile.

The 1980 Energy Security Act established the Synthetic Fuels Corporation (SFC) to subsidize exotic fossil fuels. The act authorized expenditure of $17 billion, with a goal of bringing about production of 500,000 barrels of oil a day by 1987 and 2 million barrels a day by 1992. It promised another $68 billion once the SFC submitted a "comprehensive strategy" to meet the production targets.

But by the time the first $100 million—million, not billion—went out the door, all but two SFC projects were cancelled due to cost overruns and technical problems. Congress shut down the SFC in 1985.

Congress likewise gave Carter all of the solar and other renewable-energy subsidies he wanted. From fiscal years 1979 through 1981, in fact, Carter got more solar-energy subsidy dollars than he asked for. A residential tax credit was put in place for 40 percent of the first $10,000 spent on photovoltaic solar-energy systems. A business tax credit of 15 percent was granted through the end of 1985. A "Solar and Energy Conservation Bank" was established and authorized to spend $3 billion between fiscal years 1981 and 1984 to provide subsidized residential and commercial loans for solar energy and conservation investments.

Subsequent (Democratic) Congresses, however, cut those appropriations and tax credits back substantially. Would solar power have done better if they hadn't? While it's certainly true that the cost of producing solar-powered electricity fell dramatically during the 1980s, there is little evidence that federal subsidies had much to do with it.

President Carter even got the ethanol subsidies he wanted. Congress extended the federal excise-tax credits that were scheduled to expire and enacted a new tax credit of 30 to 40 cents per gallon for those who were not subject to the excise tax to begin with. It authorized $1.2 billion to promote conventional and cellulosic ethanol, with a goal of replacing 10 percent of gasoline consumption by 1990. These subsidies, however, proved incapable of making ethanol economically competitive with conventional gasoline. So did massive increases in those subsidies over the course of 29 years.

To pay for all of this, President Carter got the windfall-profit tax he wanted. But this too proved disappointing; before being abolished in 1988, the tax returned only $40 billion of the $175 billion projected. And analysts at the Congressional Research Service estimate that it reduced domestic oil production by 3 to 6 percent—thus driving up prices—and increased oil imports by 8 to 16 percent.

Most memorably, however, the president promised to employ both carrots and sticks to force conservation. "I'm asking you for your good and for your nation's security to take no unnecessary trips, to use carpools or public transportation whenever you can, to park your car one extra day per week, to obey the speed limit, and to set your thermostats to save fuel," Carter said in that speech. "Every act of energy conservation like this is more than just common sense—I tell you it is an act of patriotism."

The federal government, in fact, would make sure that you did your part. The president issued an executive order restricting indoor temperatures in non-residential buildings to 78 degrees or warmer in the summer and 65 degrees or cooler in the winter. The administration did little to monitor compliance, however, arguing that the program was "largely self-enforcing."

Carter promised to mandate a 50 percent reduction in the use of oil for electricity generation. And although the president failed to get his $10 billion coal-conversion plan through Congress, the amount of electricity generated from oil nevertheless declined from 3,283 trillion BTUs in 1979 to 715 trillion BTUs today. Once again, markets accomplished what politicians could not: As oil rose in price, it became more expensive than coal, so generator operators switched over without the government's forcing them to.

More arresting was President Carter's promise to institute gasoline rationing if Congress gave him the authority and he found it necessary. Congress gave him the authority, but he left office before finding it necessary. And it's a good thing: Only a few years earlier, Nixon had instituted gasoline rationing, and gasoline lines and shortages had promptly followed.

President Carter's most aggressive stab

ROMAN GENN

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at conservation, however, involved the U.S. auto fleet. Carter initially suggested giving Detroit more flexibility to meet the mileage standards that had been adopted before he took office, and Congress obliged him in 1980. But in the final months of his administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration proposed raising those standards for passenger vehicles to 48 miles per gallon by 1995. Just three months later, the Reagan administration rescinded the proposal.

While it's hard to envision what the auto fleet would look like today had that rule been adopted (no car currently for sale in America would meet Carter's standard), we can guess that the roads would be more congested, urban sprawl would be far worse, traffic fatalities would be higher, and ambient air pollution would be greater. Economist Andrew Kleit has explained why in detail. The short version: When people can drive more miles for each gallon of gas they buy, they tend to do just that.

Soaring domestic demand for oil did not cause the energy crisis of the 1970s, or today's. Neither did disruptions in the supply of oil. Rather, the 1970s price spiral was largely driven by inept monetary policy, whereas today's spike is the consequence of an unanticipated surge in global economic growth, as economist Lutz Kilian argues in a forthcoming paper for the *Journal of Economic Literature*. Hence, even had we embraced the Carter plan in toto, it would not have made the current price spiral less likely or less steep. For instance, a 48 mpg standard might have reduced global oil consumption from 85 million barrels a day (where it is at present) to 80 million barrels a day, but when there's less consumption, there's also less investment in production. Kilian's summary of the academic literature suggests that, in this hypothetical, 80 million–barrel–a–day world, the global economic surge of 2003 would have caused the exact same price explosion we see today.

At its most basic level, federal energy policy addresses two questions: Does the government know better than investors which technologies to invest in, and does the government know better than consumers how much energy they'll need? America's experience with Carter's suggestions demonstrates that the government has no advantage in either. **NR**

■ THE WORLD

Communion No More

As Anglicanism's transcontinental unraveling continues

TRAVIS KAVULLA

With a half millennium behind it, the Anglican Communion has had a good run. Its unique blend of Catholic and Protestant theology and ecclesiology, first outlined in Queen Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity of 1559, has weathered turbulences as diverse as Cromwell's Puritans and Stuart Catholics.

Over the centuries, it flourished. As English culture spread beyond its island home, Anglicanism outgrew its stature as a national church and became a religion of empire—first in North America and later in the African colonies. The faith grew dramatically in the last hundred years, and Anglicanism became a truly global church. Today, it is the third-largest Christian denomination, behind Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

The wide geographic and cultural reach of the church, however, has lately seemed likely to be its undoing. While Anglicanism can count 77 million people as believers and prides itself on being a worldwide, unified "communion" with, the term implies, a single ethics, this is not the reality on the ground. In England itself, Anglicanism is a civil religion, the state church: Even today, the British government has a hand in appointing the church's bishops. This has led to a latitudinarian (some would say flaky) character that prefers the soup neither too hot nor too cold.

In the former colonies, meanwhile, the churches have been unbound. Anglicans are one among many sects in North America, though the very definition of the blue-blood "White Anglo-Saxon Protestant"—WASP—is an Anglican, or "Episcopalian," as they began to be called after Englishness became unpopular stateside. The U.S. Episcopal Church (TEC) is wealthy, but shrinking nonetheless. In the past five years, it has lost 10 percent of its parishioners, according to its own, favorably skewed numbers.

American Anglicanism's response to modern times has been to shake off unfriendly dogmas and become more "welcoming." Today, it traffics in affirmation and self-esteem, not moralizing. It is a church that preaches "Come as you are, stay as you are, and we'll have a big party celebrating who you are," in the words of one critic, the Rev. David Short. TEC is one of the few churches that can boast a bishop who openly disbelieves the divinity of Jesus Christ and a woman priest who is also, she says, a Muslim.

That, then, is the West. But Africa, last of the places to be converted to Anglicanism, is proving to be the most resolute in the faith. The church is heavily evangelical, and its orthodoxy—that the parishioner must conform to Christ, and not Christ to him—has proved wildly popular. Anglican churches in Africa claim huge and growing numbers of followers. Together, they account for some 43 million of the Anglican Communion's members—a majority.

These two wings of Anglicanism grew apart quietly for decades. No crises came to the surface, and though all parties were aware that church doctrines were being watered down in some dioceses, there was little in the way of authority to keep everyone in line. Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury and the head of the English church, is no pope, either in his personal temperament or, even if he were forceful, in the powers of his office. His only real stick is the power of invitation: in particular, decision as to who is to be included in the Lambeth Conference, the once-a-decade meeting of the world's 800 bishops, meant to keep them on the same theological page.

Usually, Lambeth has skewed heavily toward the liberal Western churches, which enjoy disproportionate power because of their large numbers of bishoprics. Americans, for instance, account for a paltry 3 percent of the total "active baptized membership" of Anglicans world-

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wide, but are organized into 110 dioceses, each with its own bishop. Kenya's church, with twice the number of parishioners, has fewer than a third that number of bishops.

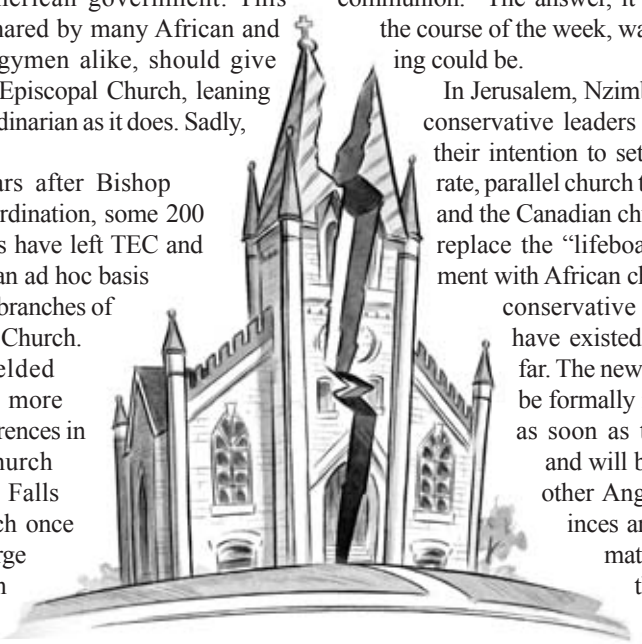
Even so, at the 1998 Lambeth Conference conservative bishops found their voice and attained a majority to reaffirm the church's teaching on sexuality—i.e., that intercourse outside of heterosexual marriage is sinful. Five years after this resolution, in 2003, TEC unequivocally transgressed it, confirming the election of Gene Robinson—a gay, divorced, openly partnered man—as bishop of New Hampshire. With this act, "the sleeping giant of evangelical and orthodox Anglicanism was aroused," says Peter Jensen, archbishop of Sydney and a leading Western advocate of the traditionalist cause (whose support otherwise comes mainly from Africa).

Robinson's ordination was to the Anglican Communion's troubles what the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was to the First World War. The ordination was not significant simply because it happened, but also because it was so ostentatious a conclusion to a long period of subtle but substantial drift—an act directly in conflict with what a strong majority of the church had only recently spoken out, in exceptionally clear terms, against. The Americans were seen not merely to be engaging in false Biblical teaching, but to be doing so with a recklessness and unilateralism often associated with the American government. This sentiment, shared by many African and English clergymen alike, should give pause to the Episcopal Church, leaning left and latitudinarian as it does. Sadly, it has not.

In the years after Bishop Robinson's ordination, some 200 congregations have left TEC and affiliated on an ad hoc basis with African branches of the Anglican Church. This has yielded some of the more bizarre occurrences in American church history; the Falls Church, which once counted George Washington as a vestryman, is now a member of the Church of Nigeria. The arrangement is fitting, says Benjamin Nzimbi, archbishop of Kenya, who thinks of the African rescue of Westerners as the repaying of a favor. "When I think about the missionaries' coming to Kenya, and the pains they went through—many died, they faced all sorts of challenges, all the while remaining faithful to the Gospel, I cannot think of anything else but to remain in this faith," Nzimbi tells me.

Today, once more, Lambeth is in session, to adjourn in early August. There is so much contention that, instead of authority and action, only a tepid "dialogue" is on the menu. And even this seems bound to fail. Angry both at the wishy-washiness of the church in its time of crisis and at the refusal of Canterbury to invite bishops ordained by African churches to serve in America, nearly one-quarter of the world's bishops, mostly Africans, are boycotting Lambeth altogether.

Conservative Anglicans preempted the conference by a month. With about 1,200 Anglicans in attendance from Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe, and America, including 303 bishops, they met in Jerusalem in June under the banner of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON). At the beginning of this week of pilgrimage, Peter Akinola, the primate of the Nigerian church—the largest in the communion—asked the gathered clergy and laymen whether "anything [could] be done . . . for the restoration of sacramental communion." The answer, it emerged in the course of the week, was that nothing could be.



DARREN GYGI

In Jerusalem, Nzimbi and other conservative leaders made clear their intention to set up a separate, parallel church to rival TEC and the Canadian church, and to replace the "lifeboat" arrangement with African churches that conservative Americans have existed under thus far. The new church will be formally inaugurated as soon as this winter, and will be led, as all other Anglican provinces are, by a primate serving as the church's face to the world. Jack Iker, the bishop of Fort Worth and a conservative, expects entire dioceses—his own, Pittsburg's, and a couple of others at least—to leave the Episcopal Church and affiliate with the new church.

Under siege, TEC has taken drastic measures to nip breakaway movements in the bud. David Anderson, an American bishop ordained under Nigerian authority, says that after vestries of churches in Virginia and Connecticut announced a 40-day period of prayer leading up to a vote of the congregation on whether to disaffiliate from the American church, the Episcopal bishops of the area sent their deputies to the churches' banks and submitted new signature cards for their accounts. The congregations contested the bishops' authority in the matter, but in both instances the banks panicked and froze the accounts, making it impossible for the churches to make payroll or pay utility bills.

Few congregations that have broken away have been able to keep their church buildings. In Florida, some two dozen congregations were forced out of their parish properties after affiliating with the Rwanda-originated Anglican Mission in the Americas. Most of those properties remain closed for want of staff and, for that matter, parishioners.

In Virginia, the Episcopal Church took out a $2 million line of credit on its properties so it could sue breakaway churches, including George Washington's old parish. While GAFCON was meeting, a state judge released a verdict granting conservatives nearly a dozen of these properties. I was with Jim Oakes, the former senior warden of one of them, outside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem when he learned that his congregation had managed to save their church. Our location made the moment seem almost providential. Oakes would probably eliminate the "almost." He was emotional, having volunteered many hours a week to resolve the church's legal troubles. "We implore the Episcopal Church to find ways to handle this division and put this dispute behind them, and to start preaching Christ's Gospel again," he now says.

TEC has not announced whether it will appeal the ruling. Regardless, the Western faction seems to be on the less vital, losing end of the larger war for Anglicanism's conscience. **NR**

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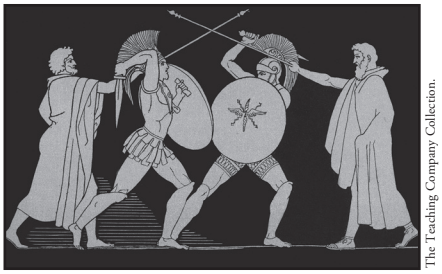

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About Your Professor

Dr. Garrett G. Fagan is an Associate Professor in Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies and History at The Pennsylvania State University. A native of Dublin, Ireland, he received his Ph.D. in Roman Studies at McMaster University. Professor Fagan's main research interest is Roman social history. His articles have appeared in international journals, and he is the author of *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* (1999).

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■ CULTURE WATCH

Merci beaucoup, Barack

On the matter of Americans and foreign languages

JAY NORDLINGER

Barack Obama was engaged in one of his favorite pastimes: lecturing Americans on their inadequacies. He said, "Instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English—they'll learn English—*you* need to make sure your child can speak Spanish. You should be thinking about, how can your child become bilingual? We should have every child speaking more than one language." He went on, "It's embarrassing when Europeans come over here. They all speak English—they speak French, they speak German. And then we go over to Europe. And all we can say is, 'Merci beaucoup.'"

It's embarrassing, says Senator Obama. There is a certain type of American who is always embarrassed, especially in front of Europeans. We've all seen them. "Oh, we're so fat, we're so loud, we're so unsophisticated. We use ketchup, we don't know what to do with a bidet, we have the death penalty!" And "we don't learn foreign languages!" Most of these Americans are young and callow, and grow out of these attitudes. But many do not—and Mr. and Mrs. Obama seem like unreformed college students, in so many ways.

This issue of foreign languages is one of many clubs with which to beat Americans. According to the Gallup organization, a quarter of Americans can speak a language other than English well enough to hold a conversation. That doesn't seem so bad to me, all things considered. But be that as it may.

Americans have long been jittery about their relationship with foreign languages. It is part of their self-examination, which, in a sickly form, is an inferiority complex. Earlier this decade, the U.S. Senate was moved to declare a year (2005) the "Year of Foreign Language Study." There was a time, about 15 years before that, when people were saying that Americans would have to learn Japanese. That was when Michael Dukakis was running political ads with an ominous rising sun. And I remember a football game, shown on television one Saturday afternoon.

During halftime, each university got to brag about itself with a video. Notre Dame, I believe, showed one of its students—an ordinary white kid—speaking Japanese. He narrated the video, and the rest of us got subtitles.

Soon, Japan went kaput (sort of), and Americans focused their worries elsewhere.

Some of us study foreign languages for the same reason others collect butterflies or play tennis: It's fun. Moreover, there are practical benefits, such as being strengthened in your home language. I believe I have studied five languages, formally—and maybe the same number informally. I hope to do more. But I reject the idea that Americans are especially guilty on the foreign-language front. There are differences between us and the Europeans: For us, the study of foreign languages is mainly a matter of choice; for them, it is something else.

America is a great big continental nation, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. On our northern border, there is another vast continental nation, and it's almost entirely English-speaking. On our southern border, there is a Spanish-speaking country, plus the Gulf of Mexico. And guess what? Along our (short) border with Quebec, there is a fair amount of bilingualism—English and French. Along our (longer) border with Mexico, there's a fair amount of bilingualism—English and Spanish.

Exactly what you would expect. Because this is how these things work. If Europeans know foreign languages, it's not necessarily out of intellectual virtue; it's because the languages come naturally. A Swiss person—to take an easy example—lives in a small country with four official languages. A Nebraskan lives in a big state in the middle of a gigantic nation, and is a long, long way from other languages. But we should remember, too, that all the world's languages come to the United States—because all the world's people do.

Back to Europe for a moment: Eric Hobsbawm, the celebrated hard-Left British historian, was once praised for knowing foreign languages. One of his sharpest critics, David Pryce-Jones, pointed out that "Hobsbawm has mastered only some of the main European languages, a feat shared by lots of restaurant waiters, never mind academics." Furthermore, sometimes language is imposed, against the will of the people. Many Eastern Europeans won't breathe a word of Russian, though they know it (and despite the fact that Russian is a great world language).

Consider this, too: For better or worse—and I say better—English is the world's lingua franca. And that bears on Americans and foreign languages. We are born into a language that virtually the entire world speaks or seeks to speak. For many, many of the world's people, it is a sine qua non. (Pardon my Latin.) The incentive to learn English is great, the incentive to learn other languages, not so great.

We should remember that all the world's languages come to the United States—because all the world's people do.

Incidentally, are you familiar with the old problem in Paris? You speak to them in French, and they answer you in English (however badly). You speak to them in English, and you'll get a stream of offended French from them. Sometimes, being an American means not being able to win.

I could tell 500 stories about the primacy of English in the world, but will tell you only this—my favorite. One afternoon, I was part of a small group of journalists who met with Álvaro Uribe, the president of Colombia. This was at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland, as it happens). Before our session began, it became clear to me that I was the only non–Spanish speaker in the room. Not only that, I was the only non–*native* Spanish speaker in the room. I moved to leave. But Uribe insisted I stay—presidential order. And he, his cabinet mem-

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bers, the Latin American journalists, and I talked for an hour in English. No one batted an eye or so much as groped for a word. Amazing.

By the way, another charge against Americans is that they don't know geography—that *we* don't know geography. A couple of months ago, Omar Sharif, the Egyptian-born actor, was on Arab television. Chances are, he didn't think any American could hear him—but, thanks to the Middle East Media Research Institute and its translations, we did. Sharif, who made a fortune off America, said,

> [America] is a large and rich country, with great possibilities and everything, but they don't understand what's going on in the rest of the world. They just don't get it. I lived in America for a long time. Only 10 percent of Americans have a passport. In other words, 90 percent have never left America. . . . You show them an unmarked map of Europe and ask them where France is, and they don't know. Ask them were Italy is—okay, Italy they know, because it looks like a shoe. They don't know anything. They are ignorant.

First, Italy looks more like a boot than a shoe. Second, the United States—those 50—is itself kind of a geography quiz. Third, would Sharif like to put the general geographical knowledge of the average Egyptian or Arab up against that of the average American? How about simple literacy?

Not long after hearing about this Sharif interview, I was with some Lebanese in Long Island, N.Y. One said he had heard that Americans knew nothing about geography, but found this wasn't true. Another said, "That's because you're in New York. If you were in the Midwest . . ."—and she said "Midwest" as though she was describing the farthest reaches of the Sahara. I remarked that I was from the Midwest, and so was my sister (her friend). She just smiled, weakly.

Incidentally, not 10 percent, but about a third of Americans hold a passport. And that reminds me of one of the most depressing encounters I ever had. It was with a young U.S. Foreign Service officer in a European country. He maintained that Republicans, in particular, were ignorant of the world, and liked it that way. He said that GOP congressmen bragged about not having a passport. I said I doubted it.

At another point in the conversation, I mentioned a second Foreign Service officer, who was hoping to be posted back to the United States. The reason? His two sons, about ten and eight, had never lived in America, and he wanted them to know their country. My guy—the Republicans-and-passports guy—snorted, "Yeah—introduce 'em to the joys of Burger King." I said, "Do you really think that's all there is to American culture?" He said, "Well, there's jazz." "Anything else?" I asked. He said he couldn't think of anything.

He then said that all American children should be required to live abroad—all of them. I said, "How about the children of other countries? Should they, too, be required to live abroad?" He looked annoyed.

We are all familiar with the self-hating American (although, in my experience, these people aren't really self-hating, but rather supremely self-loving—they are just embarrassed to be American). But it is depressing indeed when they represent the U.S. abroad. Stupid college kids may put a Canadian maple leaf on their backpack, but American diplomats should be more mature. What's more, I believe that Americans who denigrate their country are less respected by foreigners than they think they are.

In the vice-presidential debate of 1984, the first Bush said something that has always stayed with me. "I'll be honest with you," he said. "It's a joy to serve with a president who does not apologize for the United States of America" (Reagan). I knew just what he meant. Would Barack Obama be such a president? We are to maintain "a decent respect [for] the opinions of mankind." But a little self-confidence—justified self-confidence—is nice, too.

Of course, Americans have plenty to be ashamed of. Right off the bat, I think of political correctness, foul popular music, neglect of the elderly, and abortion on demand. But on foreign languages, I believe, we are not guilty—and that includes Senator Obama, who, by his own admission, speaks no foreign language at all. That would not impair his ability to be president. Other things would. NR

■ CULTURE WATCH II

A Call, and An Answer

Two recent Dartmouth grads explain why they joined the Marines

MICHAEL KNAPP & ETHAN MEFFORD

We stood at attention on the parade deck in the oppressive Quantico heat. In the preceding weeks, along with our fellow officer candidates, we had run countless miles through the woods, tackled and retackled the obstacle course, been forced to shave twice a day, and fallen into dreamless sleeps listening to lectures on discipline and integrity. We had all endured the same persistent cough and received the same eight vaccinations. Now graduation had come at last. We stood together, sweat pouring into our fresh haircuts and perfectly rolled sleeves, listening as the colonel in charge of Officer Candidates School (OCS) told us about his own decision to join the Marines. "All of you," he said, "are here because you felt the call to serve in a time of war. When I became a Marine during Vietnam, it was just to avoid the draft."

The colonel was right: We had made a choice—and choices often have to be defended. This became clear to us when, after graduating from OCS, we returned for our senior year to Dartmouth College, where plans for the future—Goldman Sachs, Fulbright scholarships, Teach For America—were the topic of every conversation.

Sometimes it was easier just to avoid the question by talking about our summer plans: "I'm doing an Arabic program at Georgetown," Ethan would say; for Michael it was "I'm doing research for a professor." But when we did divulge our

Mr. Knapp and Mr. Mefford, both second lieutenants in the Marine Corps, are 2008 graduates of Dartmouth College. They will begin further officer training this fall.

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secret, it often felt as if a sheet had descended, separating us from our insouciant classmates. First came a brief stare, and then we were met with some variation of "Why are you doing that?" in a tone either brusque or reverential. We soon learned to size up our audience and respond appropriately. To people who we felt deserved an explanation, devoid of bravado or humility or caustic humor, we would start by saying, "Lots of reasons."

Michael first thought about joining when he was in high school, but he dutifully applied to college instead. During his freshman year, which began in the fall of 2004, he returned to the idea, just as it was beginning to stir in Ethan. After meeting as freshmen, when we lived in the same dormitory, we would seek out a quiet spot in the cafeteria to pore over the *New York Times*. Reading about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we experienced intense, visceral reactions: hope, sadness, despair, anger. We both had friends from high school who had enlisted and done tours; it was our generation's struggle, and it felt strange for our priorities to be elsewhere, caught up in academics and the trivialities of college life.

We found ourselves drawn to the study of history and government because these subjects produced in us sensations similar to those we felt reading *Times* articles. As we began to mull over a decision that would come as a shock to our families and many of our friends, we found strength in history. It was heartening to know that generations before us had accepted such challenges and faced the same sort of fear and doubt. Ethan was struck by Leo Tolstoy's depiction of the Russian artillery crew at the Battle of Borodino in *War and Peace*, which reveals the crew's cohesion and dedication, working to the hilt even as French artillery rapidly reduced its ranks.

The generations of men and women who have exhibited similar courage and struggled, often selflessly, for a greater cause provided a model that we both hoped to emulate. And with the study of history came a desire to participate in history. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will have profound effects throughout the world, and by joining and serving in the armed forces, we could intertwine ourselves with history.

During our sophomore year, we developed an intellectual framework that justified and encouraged our interest in national service. An introductory political-ideas class that we took touched on Western political thought from Plato to Marx. Plato's idealism in particular spoke to us: His *Republic* rejected cynicism about human nature and its larger manifestation, politics. It was closely akin to the youthful idealism we felt welling up within ourselves. We also seized upon Plato's words, delivered through his teacher Socrates in *Crito*, on the central importance of the social contract as the foundation of a functional society.

By virtue of the upbringing that this society had allowed us, and the myriad opportunities that had been extended our way simply because we were Americans, it was incumbent upon us to offer our services to our country. The privileges we have enjoyed endow us with a responsibility, an obligation, to fulfill President Kennedy's charge: To this country that has given us so much, it is our turn to give back. We reject the pernicious belief, commonly held at our most highly esteemed institutions, that fighting our nation's battles is someone else's job.

"When you lose a Marine . . ." Our company commander's voice caught slightly, and rose with emotion. Two hundred officer candidates sat bolt upright, eyes fixed on the speaker. He was not going to say that it was all right. "And you write to his family . . ." He was speaking of young men and women who risked their lives to promote American foreign policy and the futures of Iraq and Afghanistan. Accepting a commission into the Marine Corps is a grave responsibility. America is granting us charge of a platoon of its best young men and women, entrusting us with their safety, showing confidence in our judgment.

Many of our contemporaries also feel a call to service. In greater numbers than ever before, fresh graduates are choosing to help their country in various ways, in communities at home and across the world. But as opportunities for national service have diversified to include the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and Teach For America, among others, there has been a steep decline in the number of graduates of elite schools who choose to serve in the military.

Many never even consider joining the armed forces—yet military service offers young graduates unparalleled opportunities. It can serve as a great equalizer, bringing together people of all different backgrounds and teaching them to work as a team. Few other entry-level positions involve so much decision-making independence; as second lieutenants, we will serve our platoons in both a leadership and a supporting role. Years later, the faces of senior officers light up as they recall the days when they were closest to the privates, corporals, and sergeants—the backbone of the Corps.

By the fourth week of OCS in Quantico, we had both been pressed beyond our breaking points. "Everyone has one," the colonel had assured us, "and we are going to find out where yours is." An empty threat, we thought at the time: We were in stellar physical condition and had sworn to ourselves and each other that we would not quit. But by Week Four, blisters covered Ethan's feet, courtesy of his new boots, and the hacking cough that everyone had caught had in his case developed into a fever. He lay at his appointed spot in the defensive perimeter, shivering in the 90-degree Virginia heat. It was his turn to lead the fire team in an impromptu attack. Mustering whatever enthusiasm he could, he tried to remember the various signals and commands that the exercise called for, but he forgot several, and the all-important "command presence" was lacking. The sergeant called Ethan over for his debriefing. "You're struggling," he said. "Why do you want to be here?"

"I think the country's in a tough spot," Ethan replied. "And everyone who has something to offer should be willing to give to help us through. I think I have something to offer." The sergeant paused for a second; he had expected the rote answer: "Because I love my country!"

"That's the best explanation I've heard. I think you do have something to offer, and I think you have what it takes." Coming from a sergeant recently returned from a tour in Iraq, this was no idle endorsement.

On the day before our college graduation, we both took the oath to become second lieutenants in the Marine Corps. In so doing, we added our names to the long list of those before us who were similarly inspired to serve, and we are determined to uphold the high standard that they set. **NR**

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Tilting We Will Go?

Windmills are not an energy policy

WILLIAM TUCKER

T■ BOONE PICKENS wants to solve the energy crisis by building windmill farms. With characteristic reticence, he is announcing his intentions with a series of slick, glossy TV and newspaper ads, a website (PickensPlan.org), and a forthcoming book. As often happens with autodidacts proclaiming a world vision, Pickens is about half right and half wrong.

As one of the most experienced and successful oilmen in the world, he is certainly on target about the threat diminishing oil supplies present to America: "We now import almost 70 percent of our oil. . . . Importing that oil is costing us $700 billion a year, $7 trillion over the next ten years. . . . World oil production has peaked at 85 million barrels a day while demand is still growing. Output may never go up again." This is an important point, but Pickens's solution is dangerously simplistic and naïve: "We now produce 22 percent of our electricity with natural gas. [Actually, it's 20 percent.] I want to replace that 22 percent with wind energy and move the natural gas over to the transport sector, where compressed natural gas can replace oil. That will lower our oil imports by 38 percent. The federal government says it's possible. It's right here in this study, '20% Wind Energy by 2030,' put out by the Department of Energy."

DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy did indeed put out such a report earlier this year. But the department, like any other federal bureaucracy, is a collection of fiefdoms pursuing their own particular passions. DOE has also put out studies supporting clean coal, geothermal energy, biofuels, and just about anything else you can name. Take your pick.

So why isn't Pickens backing nuclear power, which seems like a much more promising way to generate large amounts of new electricity? Pickens told *The American Spectator* that he worries about costs and uranium supplies. Still, he is spending $10 billion on his 4,000-megawatt (MW) wind farm, about the same as what it would cost to build 4,000 MW of nuclear capacity. So what's going on?

What Pickens is really saying is that nuclear investment right now is too risky. Although proposals for nine new reactors are currently before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, no one

Mr. Tucker's book *Terrestrial Energy: How Nuclear Power Can Lead the Green Revolution and End America's Energy Odyssey* will be published by Bartleby Press in September. It can be previewed at www.TerrestrialEnergy.org.

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knows exactly what will happen when these applications enter the approval process. As Greenpeace beats the tambourines about "more Chernobyls," as mainstream environmental groups hem and haw about how they support nuclear in principle but not in this particular instance, as the public remains confused about whether a reactor really can blow up or become the target of a terrorist attack, completion of a single reactor could easily stretch out 15 years or more, as it did in the 1970s and 1980s, leaving a trail of ruined investors in its wake.

A windmill, however, can be put up in three months and, most important for investors, start collecting its production credit on federal taxes immediately. In half the states, utilities are mandated to fill "renewable portfolios" with things like wind energy, whether it is useful or not. Pickens told *Fast Company* he expects to make a 15 percent—perhaps 25 percent—profit on his West Texas wind farm. You can't guarantee that to a nuclear investor. Windmills will reap plenty of profits from all the subsidies and mandates—yet their contribution to the nation's energy budget is likely to be marginal at best.

Windmills will reap plenty of profits from all the subsidies and mandates—yet their contribution to the nation's energy budget is likely to be marginal at best.

In the absence of any real market signals that haven't been drowned out by politics, the best way to compare different energy strategies is a simple concept called "energy density." As the term implies, energy density is a measure of how much energy can be produced from a specified unit of weight, volume, or area. In essence, it shows how concentrated a pool of energy is as we find it in nature.

BURNING SUNSHINE

Nearly all the energy on earth originated as radiation from the sun. Somewhere around 750,000 years ago, early humans discovered the vast quantities of solar energy stored in dried plant material, and fire became a source of supplementary heat and light. Then, as forests began to disappear in the 17th century, Europeans discovered another source of stored sunlight in fossil fuels. These represent the accumulation of solar energy over millions of years. Coal is the most abundant—we will probably never run out of it—and the octane molecules in gasoline are probably the densest storehouse of solar energy we will ever encounter. Pound for pound, coal contains twice as much energy as wood, and gasoline and natural gas contain four times as much. The Industrial Revolution became possible only when these denser forms of solar energy were developed.

Now, as we begin to run up against the natural limits of fossil fuels, it is important to consider the energy density of anything we might use in their place. Wind, water, biofuels, and the direct use of sunlight are anywhere from 5 to 50 times more dilute than fossil fuels. There is only one way to compensate for their low density, and that is to consume huge amounts of land in gathering them.

This is the Achilles heel of every form of "alternative energy." When first introduced in the 1970s, alternative energy came with the slogan "Small is beautiful." Prophets such as Amory Lovins, David Brower, and Lester Brown pictured a post-industrial world of backyard windmills, rooftop solar collects, and organic gardens where small plots would be set aside for biofuels that would run hyper-efficient cars. Self-sufficiency was the theme. It all sounded charming and romantic.

The reality has been anything but. We now use one-quarter of America's corn crop for biofuels in order to replace less than 4 percent of our oil. GreenFuel Technologies, a Massachusetts startup, has a plan to grow photosynthesizing algae that will consume the carbon emissions from coal plants, and can be turned into biodiesel to run cars. It sounds like a great idea, except that the pools required for gathering sunlight to convert 40 percent of the exhausts from a single power plant will occupy 15 square miles.

T. Boone Pickens will soon be running up against a similar density problem with his wind farms. A standard wind farm built to generate 1,000 MW—the capacity of an average coal or nuclear plant—would occupy about 125 square miles. Pickens wants to space his windmills a little wider—five to the square mile instead of eight—so for his 4,000 MW he will need 800 square miles.

But that 4,000 MW is only the "nameplate capacity." Because wind blows so irregularly, even the best wind farms now generate electricity at only 30 percent of their theoretical capacity. (By contrast, nuclear reactors run at 92 percent capacity.) That means he will need 1,200 square miles of windmills to equal the output of three or four coal or nuclear plants, each of which occupies only a square mile. Factoring in the land required for mining adds several square miles for coal, and much less for uranium.

Even then, the electricity generated by windmills is not what the industry calls "dispatchable," meaning able to be produced and delivered when and where needed. As the authors of "20% Wind Energy by 2030" write:

> Incorporating wind energy into power system planning and operation, then, will require new ways of thinking about energy resources. . . . Thinking in terms of "backing up" the wind is not appropriate because the wind capacity was installed to generate low-emissions energy but not to meet load growth requirements. Wind power cannot replace the need for many "capacity resources," which are generators and dispatchable load that are available to be used when needed to meet peak load.

In other words, don't count on its being there—backup from other resources will always be necessary. Building and main-

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taining a wind-power infrastructure is a supplement, not a replacement, for fossil-fuel plants.

Part of the mistaken belief that wind can be a reliable source of electricity comes from a misapprehension of what the "grid" is. The national grid is not a machine for churning out electricity. It is more like a high-wire act—the Flying Wallendas balancing six people on a bicycle 50 feet above the ground.

Electricity must be consumed the moment it is generated; there are no methods for storage on an industrial scale. This means that supply and demand must constantly match within about 5 percent. Otherwise there will be power "dips" or "surges," which can cause brownouts, ruin electrical equipment, or even bring the whole system crashing down.

Traditionally, maintaining voltage balance has involved two things: (1) matching supply with demand through the normal daytime/nighttime fluctuations, with demand usually peaking around mid-afternoon, and (2) maintaining a "spinning reserve" against sudden losses of power, in case an overloaded transmission line brushes against a tree and shorts out, or a generator unexpectedly shuts down. Utilities generally build "peaking plants" to handle high daytime demand, then carry a "spinning reserve" of 20 percent of output to guard against shutdowns.

GONE WITH THE WIND

Now imagine introducing a power source that is *constantly fluctuating*. The output of a windmill varies with the cube of wind speed, so it can change greatly from minute to minute. Putting windmills on the grid is a little like the Flying Wallendas' hiring a new crew member to shake the wire while they are doing their balancing act. Engineers who work on electrical grids have been quietly complaining for years, and over the last decade, grid operators in Denmark, Japan, and Ireland have all refused to accept more wind energy. In fact, Denmark—the world leader in wind generation—stopped building windmills altogether in 2007. After long discussions at numerous symposiums and in professional energy journals, a consensus has emerged that, even with very accurate weather forecasts and other improvements, a grid can at best tolerate a maximum of 20 percent wind energy. Above that, the fluctuations become too difficult to mask. That's why DOE chose the 20 percent–by–2030 goal.

Even reaching that magical 20 percent, however, won't mean replacing the 20 percent of electricity that is produced with natural gas. That's because not all generating capacity is interchangeable. Different power sources play different roles on the grid, so while some gas generators may see less use if wind power is added, the role of others will actually increase.

Natural-gas electric plants come in two types. The first type consists of "combined cycle" plants, almost all of which are large-scale installations. They produce electricity by burning natural gas and using the resulting ultra-hot exhausts to drive a generator, then extracting leftover heat to make steam, which drives another turbine. These highly efficient plants convert 60 percent of the fuel's energy into electricity, as opposed to 30 percent in ordinary steam boilers.

The second kind of natural-gas electrical generators are "gas turbines," which are essentially jet engines bolted to the ground. Since they do not boil water for steam, they can be started in an instant, making them excellent for following peak loads. But they do not have the efficiency of combined-cycle and are very expensive to operate.

Combined-cycle natural-gas plants have been the most commonly built type of power plant since 1990, mainly because they produce less air pollution than coal. But now that natural gas has become expensive, many of these plants are sitting idle. Although gas constitutes 39 percent of our generating capacity, it generates only 20 percent of our electricity. (Nuclear, on the other hand, constitutes 10 percent of capacity but produces 19 percent of our electricity because reactors are running all the time.) So natural-gas generation is, indeed, sensitive to competition, and as far as these large-scale installations are concerned, Pickens is right: Bringing windmills online will probably mean cutting down production from some coal and combined-cycle natural-gas plants.

Gas turbines, on the other hand, will become *more* important as wind is incorporated onto the grid. They will have to be on constant standby to raise and lower voltage with the wind's fluctuation. So wind power will reduce some uses of natural gas in electrical generation, but require more of it in others. As a generally pro-wind study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory concluded: "The 20% Wind Scenario would . . . supply enough energy to displace about 50% of electric utility natural gas consumption and 18% of coal consumption by 2030." There goes half of Pickens's projected saving, which depended on displacing 100 percent of electric-utility natural-gas consumption.

If Pickens's dream is realized, you will probably be able to drive from Texas to North Dakota without ever being out of sight of a windmill—just as they are visible everywhere in west-

ROMAN GENN

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ern Denmark. The one oasis may be Pickens's own 68,000-acre property in the Texas panhandle. "I'm not going to have the windmills on my ranch," he told *Fast Company*. "They're ugly."

Oh, there's one more rub. Bringing windmills online will require building a whole new cross-country transmission system. While wind energy is concentrated in the Midwest, consumer demand is mostly on the East and West Coasts. Normal transmission lines—of 138 kilovolts (kV) and 345 kV—lose about 10 to 15 percent of their wattage every 1,000 miles, which is not a problem when the power is generated close to the consumer. But transmitting electricity halfway across the country will require a completely new infrastructure of 765 kV lines that cover long distances without losing power. This could be an enormous problem, because utility executives now say the only thing more difficult than siting a power plant is building new transmission lines, since every property owner and municipal jurisdiction in the path gets to have a say. Ranchers who are as just as picky as Pickens about what they permit on their land could pose huge obstacles.

IF NOT WIND, WHAT?

Is there a way out of this conundrum? There certainly is. The greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century was the vast store of energy concentrated in the nucleus of the atom. The energy released from splitting a uranium atom is 2 million times greater than the energy released by breaking a carbon-hydrogen bond in coal.

The tremendous energy density in uranium produces an extraordinarily smaller environmental footprint. It explains why uranium can be mined at a few isolated sites, while coal must be extracted by digging whole cities underground or ripping the tops off mountains, as is being done in West Virginia. It explains why a 1,000 MW coal plant must be fed by a 110-car coal train arriving every day, while a nuclear reactor is refueled by a single tractor-trailer delivering a batch of new fuel rods once every 18 months. It explains why France can take all the waste from 25 years of producing 75 percent of its electricity with nuclear reactors and store it beneath the floor of one room at La Hague. The incredible energy density in the nucleus of the atom is the greatest environmental benefaction ever bestowed upon humanity.

Even so, we will probably continue littering the American landscape with marginally productive windmills. With a 1.5-cent-per-kilowatt-hour tax credit permanently in place, and with utilities mandated to buy "renewable" electricity, investors can hardly lose. Meanwhile, anyone who elects to put money into nuclear reactors faces much greater risks—even though, in the long run, their contribution to our energy budget will be vastly more valuable.

With the overwhelming advantages that nuclear power offers, it is hard to imagine it will not be part of the solution to the world's energy problems—as its success in France already illustrates. Yet economic advantage means little when politicians and interest groups have usurped the power of choice. And so the battle will be in large part political. It's time for the public to awaken to the enormous, unparalleled benefits of nuclear energy. **NR**

■ LATIN AMERICA

Uribe to the Rescue

Colombia's president is winning the battle for his country's future

OTTO REICH

When Álvaro Uribe was sworn in as president of Colombia in August of 2002, the question in the minds of U.S. policymakers was when, not whether, the Colombian government would fall into the hands of Marxist terrorists or right-wing paramilitaries. Some wondered if a military coup would come first. Terrorists operated with so little constraint that Uribe took the oath of office with bombs and rockets detonating outside the building he stood in, killing 19 civilians and injuring 60 more.

In 2002, large swathes of the country were controlled by two Marxist armies: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the National Liberation Army (known by their Spanish abbreviations, FARC and ELN), which were estimated by U.S. intelligence agencies to total nearly 30,000 armed rebels between them. Detachments of these guerrillas, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, overran towns, military installations, and police posts, killing pitilessly; survivors faced kidnapping and torture. The guerrillas regularly sabotaged vulnerable economic targets: Oil pipelines and storage facilities were attacked hundreds of times, spilling an amount of petroleum equivalent to two *Exxon Valdez* disasters. Bombings and assassinations terrorized the major Colombian cities, whose citizens retreated to the relative security of their shuttered homes after dark.

Colombians could not travel safely overland between most cities for fear of kidnapping or worse at the hands of either the Communist guerrillas or the dreaded paramilitaries. The "paras," as they were known, began as privately financed security patrols, organized in reaction to the inability of the Colombian armed forces to defend the population from guerrilla violence. Well-to-do farmers, landowners, and likeminded citizens created mirror images of the guerrillas to defend themselves. In 2002 these groups were thought to include between 12,000 and 20,000 gunmen, though the actual number would turn out to be significantly higher. Constituted to fight terrorists, they would soon become a terror in their own right.

These developments grew out of a bleak security situation. In the late 1990s, the central government was so weak that

Mr. Reich served as assistant secretary of state for the Western hemisphere. He is the principal of Otto Reich Associates, a consulting firm in Washington, D.C.

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Black Market Baldness Cure?

If you'd love to start growing your own hair back — thick, luxurious and healthy — then this will be the most life-changing message you'll ever read.

My name is Mike Gregory. I'm 59 years old and I used to be as bald as the palm of your hand. But now my own hair is growing back like wild jungle vegetation. You can do the same. Here's what I discovered…

European scientists were doing research on skin cancer using white mice. Each morning their skin was cleansed with a special detergent. After several weeks — the scientists noticed something amazing.

The mice seemed to be growing more fur. And not just short, little mouse fur either. Super fur! This stuff was thick and long. Like a mink pelt. Could it have been the detergent?

Scientifically Proven

The scientists did a controlled, double-blind study on several hundred bald men. Each morning half the group got a small dab of this detergent rubbed into their bald scalps. The other half got a small dab of a placebo. In six weeks, new hair began to sprout on the first group's bald heads. After a year — 90% of these subjects were growing their own hair back!

I know what you're thinking… "So why can't I just buy this stuff at the drugstore?"

That's where the black market angle comes in. The FDA has approved this magic substance as a food additive and a surfactant only — not a baldness treatment. You'd be arrested and jailed if you tried to market it as a baldness remedy. You know how brutal these guys can be.

But there's no law against telling people what this stuff is and where to get it yourself.

So I wrote a little book called, "**Black Market Baldness Cure?**" It gives you the whole story. How it works, why it works and where you can get your hands on as much as you need — real cheap too. Incredibly, a ten year supply will run you less than twenty bucks!

Safe As Mother's Milk

But is it safe? It's a food additive for god's sake. If you eat ice cream, salad dressing or mayo — you've unknowingly consumed the same stuff that can grow hair on a completely bald head! So yeah — it's quite harmless.

And it works better than those other baldness treatments that can have dangerous side effects. And a heck of a lot cheaper. You'll easily spend $100.00 or more per month on most of those other "remedies".

But here's the kicker — It doesn't work on everyone. Why? I don't know. But ten percent of guys just don't respond to this treatment.

With my guarantee — it doesn't matter. Go ahead — skip ahead and read the guarantee. I'll wait…

No B.S.

OK — so you see I'm not fooling around here. This is serious business and I won't waste your time or money or ask you to do something dangerous.

Here's a short list of other guys who have used my secret to successfully grow back their hair…

The conductor of a symphony orchestra, 8 homicide detectives, an assistant chief of police, 15 dermatologists, 2 dentists, a district attorney, the head of a county health department, an NFL scout and numerous newspaper, television and radio personalities and many Hollywood celebrities. And there's thousands more. You get the idea.

There's even a United States Patent for this material. I've included a copy in the book.

So here's what this little volume will do for you...

- You will grow your own hair back — starting in about 6 weeks
- Your results are absolutely guaranteed — I take all risk
- No hormones are involved
- No surgery is involved
- No hair weaves
- No toupees
- No wigs
- No sexual side effects
- You will look like a young man again!
- Works equally well for women who have thinning hair

FREE BONUS — "How To Feel Like A Teenager Again: Ultimate Anti-Aging Secrets Hollywood Elites Paid $20,000.00 To Discover!"

During my comprehensive research on baldness I discovered the latest research results from teams of scientists, physicians and anti-aging specialists who have recently slowed down the aging process.

Specifically — they discovered five nutrients that when taken every day-actually changes your appearance, health and vitality.

Just pop a few special pills and many signs of aging can be halted and reversed. You'll start to look and feel 20 years younger in only 30 days — guaranteed!

You just need to know what these incredible little pills are and where to get them. I spill all the beans and reveal all the secrets of where and how to get these little "magic youth bullets" — without spending an arm and a leg.

I could name drop and tell you about the superstar actor/director in his 70's who's winning Oscars and swears by these nutrients. Or the international diva or the US Senator. But I'm sworn to secrecy. And they paid up to 20 grand a year for these secrets. But not you...

This special FREE bonus report is yours to keep for free — even if you return the "**Black Market**" book for a complete refund as stated in my guarantee.

Here's why you can feel confident you aren't risking a single penny…

Lifetime "I Pay For Everything" Guarantee

PART 1: Use the secret in "**Black Market Baldness Cure?**" for as long as you want. Order the secret ingredient from the list of supply houses I've provided and give it a good test. If you don't agree that you are growing your own hair back, just send the book back anytime. Take a year, five years, ten years. Send it back anytime in your *lifetime* and I'll cheerfully refund every penny of your purchase price! But you get to keep the bonus report, *"How To Feel Like A Teenager Again: Ultimate Anti-Aging Secrets Hollywood Elites Paid $20,000.00 To Discover"*.

PART 2: But here's the really good part of my guarantee: If you do ever send the book back, send me a copy of your receipt for your purchase of the magic hair growth material from the supply house and I'll refund every cent you paid for that too — up to $20.00! You risk absolutely nothing. Fair enough?

Here's how to order…

Risk-Free Trial Offer

☑ OK Mike — I'm going to take advantage of your risk-free trial offer to grow my own hair back and learn how to feel like a teenager again and stop father time in his tracks. I understand that if I'm not satisfied for any reason, I can send the book back anytime in my *lifetime* and get a complete refund of every penny I paid. But I get to keep the FREE bonus report and you'll also refund every penny I paid for the secret hair growth ingredient (up to $20.00) if I send you a copy of the receipt from the supply house. On that basis here's my $39.95 plus $4.95 S&H for a total of **$44.90**.

Please make your check or moneyorder out to **U.S. Health** and mail it to: **US Health, Dept. NR-808, 1153 Malabar Rd. NE #8267, Palm Bay, FL 32907**. You may also send your Visa, Mastercard or American Express number with expiration date. Your book and bonus report will be rushed to your door by first class mail in a discreet brown padded envelope. Thanks — Mike.

P.S. Write the code words "**Dr. Blue**" anywhere on your order and I'll send you a special 2nd FREE bonus report that will stun your sex life into action without even thinking about it. If this big "little" secret doesn't work for you — you're dead! Guys tell me this report is worth more than the other two books combined. And you can keep it even if you send the "**Black Market**" book back if you order today.

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Uribe's predecessor, Andrés Pastrana, ceded to FARC a demilitarized zone the size of Switzerland. Pastrana viewed the DMZ, or *despeje* in Spanish, as a goodwill offering that would lure the guerrillas into serious peace talks. Like many well-meaning democrats before him, Pastrana committed the mistake of projecting his good intentions onto a deceitful adversary. Instead of welcoming Pastrana's initiative and reciprocating in kind, FARC took it as a sign of weakness and turned the *despeje* into a sprawling military base. In the safety of the *despeje*, guerrillas rested and recuperated, tended their wounded, developed their strategies, and rehearsed plans for military operations. The *despeje* also provided cover for common criminal operations, from ransom kidnapping to warehousing illicit cash. Moreover, foreign terrorists, including operatives from the Irish Republican Army, came to the safe haven to teach FARC how to make more effective munitions, such as the rockets that exploded as Uribe was inaugurated. Many IRA bomb-makers and other internationalist revolutionaries traveled to Colombia through Cuba, where the Castro government gave them safe passage and operational support while pretending to serve as an honest intermediary between the Colombian government and the guerrillas. Castro's ideological heir, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, would later imitate this technique.

Álvaro Uribe

JUAN FELIPE BARRIGA/AFP

Yet for the American and European Left, the legitimate government of Colombia, not the terrorists conducting raids from the jungle, was the enemy. European governments, American progressives, and like-minded NGOs conducted a relentless campaign of propaganda against successive administrations in Colombia, portraying them not as the victims of terror but as the main perpetrators of violence in the beleaguered country. This was intended to pressure Colombia into ceding even more sovereignty to the guerrillas—not just territory, but the institutions of government, through "power sharing" accords with Marxists who had no intention of sharing power with anybody.

This chaotic security picture was coupled with an equally dire economic outlook. Investment in Colombia—both foreign and domestic—had nearly vanished, unemployment was growing, and there were nearly 2 million refugees, most or them destitute civilians fleeing the countryside and putting heavy pressure on social services in towns and cities. (For a sense of the scale relative to the size of Colombia's population, imagine 15 million U.S. residents suddenly reduced to homelessness and seeking assistance in the cities.) As the Colombian state was sinking, the population was deserting ship: In 2001, the U.S. embassy in Bogotá had a waiting list of 180,000 Colombians seeking permanent-resident visas. It would have taken a year and a half to process these applications if U.S. consular officers had done nothing else during that period. These were not aspiring tourists, but desperate people prepared never to return to their homeland. The applicants were precisely the kind a developing country most needs in order to prosper: managers, professionals, business executives—the educated middle class, who feared violence and kidnapping but did not have the money needed for personal security in the form of bodyguards, armored vehicles, and surveillance systems.

ENTER URIBE

Pastrana took a long time getting the message, but in January of 2002, with renewed support from Washington following the 9/11 attacks, he recognized the failure of his strategy. He closed the *despeje* by sending U.S.-trained troops into the DMZ and proceeded to drive the guerrillas deep into the jungle. But the voters were not convinced by these late-game efforts, and in May they elected Álvaro Uribe. A former governor of the province of Antioquia, Uribe is a slight man whose father was killed in a botched FARC kidnapping attempt in 1983. Uribe made confronting FARC the centerpiece of his campaign. Colombians today look at 2002 as the year their country was reborn. That year the government started to take control of its territory and to take the war to the guerrillas. In 2002 the government began to disband the paramilitaries and turn the economy around. Colombia has achieved a measure of success: The numbers of civilian and military deaths, kidnappings, acts of sabotage, and other indicators of insurgent activity have dropped dramatically.

Between 2002 and 2004, violence and terrorist attacks in Colombia decreased by as much as 50 percent, to the lowest levels in almost 20 years. Kidnappings declined 88 percent between 1999 and 2006. By April 2004, for the first time in decades, the government had established a permanent security presence in every Colombian municipality. Making the most of this newfound security, Colombia's economy has recovered remarkably since 2002. After a long decline, it has enjoyed five years of consistent growth. In 2007, GDP grew by 7.52 percent, among the highest rates in Latin America, and five times the growth rate of 2002. The pre-2002 capital flight and brain drain were reversed, with total investment climbing by 22 percent in 2007. Colombia is now the fourth-largest market for U.S. goods in South America. (It would probably be a much larger

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market for U.S. exports if Democrats in the U.S. Congress allowed passage of the stalled U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.)

Progress of this magnitude in such a short time is rare: In six years, Colombia has gone from being something very close to a failed state to being a relatively stable, prosperous democracy—one whose armed forces are defeating three subversive armies simultaneously. The turnaround can be attributed to both good luck and good choices: Colombia had the right leader at the right time, and executed a multifaceted national-security plan that restored the population's confidence in the central government. The drive for security was complemented by a balanced economic strategy. And, not least, Colombia enjoyed the mostly bipartisan support of the United States.

Presidents Bush and Uribe have worked to solidify the U.S.-Colombia partnership, but much of the credit goes to their predecessors, Clinton and Pastrana. In 1998, concerned about Colombia's deteriorating security situation, Clinton asked Pastrana to develop a wide-ranging strategy to reverse the decline of the Colombian state. The result was "Plan Colombia," a joint undertaking through which the U.S. has provided billions of dollars in military and economic assistance since 2000. This is one foreign-aid program of which Americans can be proud—it prevented the collapse of an ally and headed off a catastrophe that would have destabilized South and Central America.

Had Colombia fallen into the hands of Marxists, or even a non-ideological narcoterrorist force, U.S. security would have been undermined. This country of more than 40 million is the strategic keystone of South America. It straddles the Andes, the backbone of the continent; it reaches from Brazil, the Amazon Basin, and Venezuela in the east to the Caribbean, Panama, and Central America in the north and to the Pacific Ocean on the west. Colombia is rich in oil, coal, minerals, agriculture, and industry, and boasts one of the most highly educated populations in the Western Hemisphere. Its geostrategic value has made it a target for Marxist subversion for decades. Fidel Castro has trained, armed, and supported Colombian guerrillas since the 1960s, and his acolyte Hugo Chávez has taken up the task in the last decade. Thousands of documents captured in March of this year from the laptops of FARC's second-in-command (and validated by Interpol) document that fact.

Plan Colombia provided the training, equipment, intelligence, and other resources that transformed the struggling Colombian military into a fighting force capable of conducting operations on multiple fronts, protecting vital economic infrastructure, and, in July of this year, rescuing 15 hostages held by FARC, including three U.S. citizens and a former Colombian presidential candidate, Ingrid Betancourt. This operation was cunning and bloodless, substituting finesse and intelligence for brute force.

The transformation of the military as well as the civilian administration in Colombia has not been easy. From Day One, Uribe confronted official corruption, human-rights violations, and government inefficiency by firing ministers and commanders alike, including some who had been close to him. For the first time, military officers were turned over for prosecution in civilian courts. This was proof of sincerity and devotion to duty rarely seen in Latin American governments. More than 30,000 paramilitary members have voluntarily surrendered their weapons, and their leaders have begun to testify about past activities. (Note that this figure represents at least twice the number of paras originally estimated in 2002.) Because of the large number of former fighters surrendering, 35 prosecutors in the Colombian attorney general's office have been dedicated to trying paramilitary cases. The Colombian justice system, once secretive and inquisitorial, has seen U.S.-inspired reforms making trials more open and courts more independent.

On the socioeconomic front, Uribe gave the neglected working classes further reason to support the government by investing heavily in health care, education, and poverty eradication. Today, more than 60 percent of Colombians have access to health care—a record high. According to Colombian statistics, nearly 90 percent of children under age 15 are enrolled in school, and the CIA World Factbook puts the country's literacy rate at 92 percent.

> Colombia had the right leader at the right time, and executed a multifaceted national-security plan that restored the population's confidence in the central government.

Immediately on taking office, the Uribe administration went after the narcotics trade, which had financed so much violence. Uribe took a hard line against drug traffickers by spraying illegal coca crops, seizing illegal drugs, and destroying the infrastructure of the drug trade. Extradition to the U.S., prosecution, and sentencing of major drug traffickers increased fivefold between 2002 and 2005, and included the heads of major cartels. It is estimated that 70 percent of key narco-traffickers have been extradited (a fate they fear mightily, because they know that in the U.S. they will serve their full sentences without being able to purchase escape, or at least creature comforts, from corrupt officials).

In sum, since 2002, Colombia has experienced an unprecedented period of economic expansion, social stability, and relative peace. Through a series of bold reforms, the government has fostered growth in the Colombian economy, increased government transparency, invested in social-welfare programs, and achieved a significant reduction in the level of violence.

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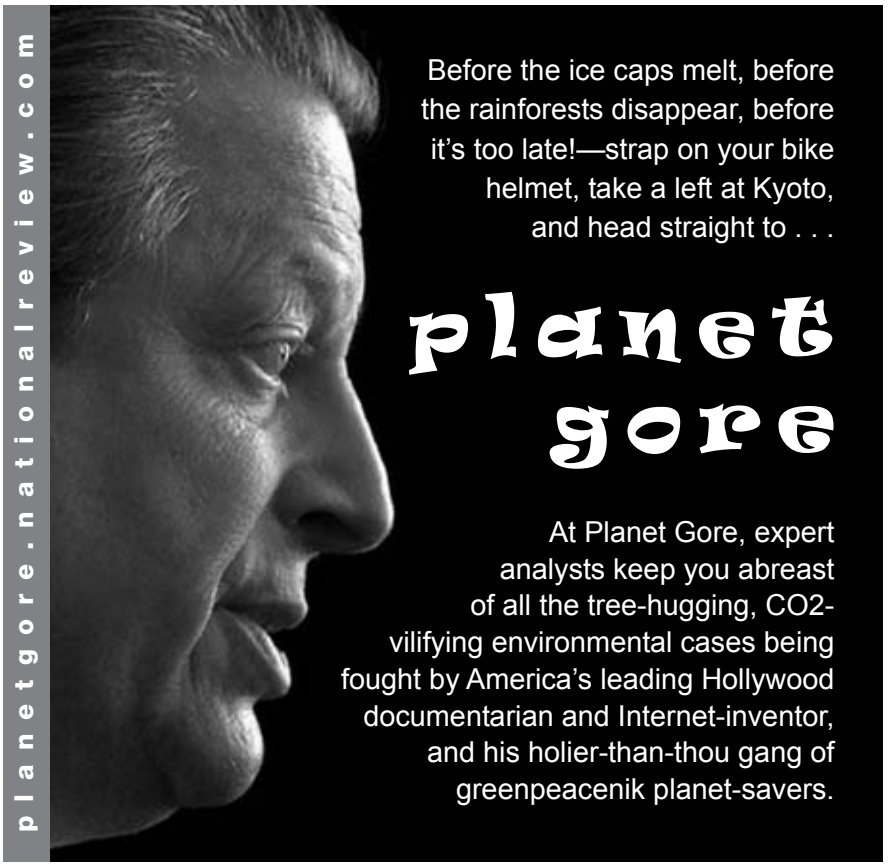
FREER TRADE, STRONGER ALLY

Colombia's is the kind of success story that the U.S. Congress should be supporting, not undermining. Yet for partisan reasons, Democrats have blocked a vote on a top foreign- and economic-policy priority of both governments: the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Because the agreement is so clearly beneficial to both nations, Democratic leaders in Congress have had to invent bogus excuses for preventing a vote. Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi are stalling because they know that, if they allowed a vote, many of their own party members would likely support the initiative. Democrats claim that they are acting in solidarity with Colombian labor leaders who have been victims of political violence. But this is pretty flimsy stuff: The data coming out of Colombia for the past six years show political violence on the wane, especially violence directed at labor leaders. The Colombian government provides protection to at-risk union organizers and other activists, and has been active in prosecuting violence directed against them. No labor leader under its protection program has been killed.

In 2002, 196 labor leaders were murdered (by all sides) in the conflict. By 2007, the last year for which there are figures, that number had declined to 25. The fact is that activists and labor leaders are killed all over the world, including in the U.S., and we do not always know who is behind these crimes (recall Jimmy Hoffa). Even one political murder is too many but, considering the situation Uribe inherited, and his success in mitigating violence, he deserves credit, not reproach.

Opponents of the Bush administration claim to be articulating a different approach to U.S. foreign policy, one that will simultaneously bring about more freedom and democracy, fight terrorism, expand the economy, create jobs (here and abroad), reduce poverty, improve human rights, provide for basic human needs, reduce drug trafficking, and, on top of all that, make the U.S. even more respected and admired than it already is. This is quite a bit to ask for. But if these idealists are sincere, the example of Colombia shows what the U.S. can do when we make the most of an opportunity. NR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the bent pin

FLORENCE KING

Facial Politics

A SOUL-SEARING debate has reared its head and will, rest assured, go on rearing and raging and "turbulenting," as Contessa Brewer might put it, right up until Election Day. At issue is the question "Why does the Right hate Michelle Obama?"

This is made to order for a three-part hysteriathon that cable news calls a "Special" and flacks for weeks ahead of time. A bevy of thoughtful 'n' concerned vivisectionists will endlessly analyze Michelle's timetable for loving her country, her murky college thesis, and her alleged use of "Whitey," all to no avail. If they want to know why the Right hates Michelle Obama all they have to do is ask me. I can tell them in five words:

Michelle has Jane Fonda's mouth.

I don't mean the impassioned drivel that comes out of their respective oral cavities. I'm talking pure physiognomy here. I mean the mouth itself: Michelle looks like Jane. It's like looking at two Hapsburgs, one white, one black, with the same unmistakable hereditary jaw. The inbred Hapsburgs had a full underbite, i.e., the top teeth are behind the bottom teeth when the mouth is closed, so that when they talked their protruding lower lip looked like an infuriated plow. They may have smiled sometimes but nobody could be sure because it always looked like a sneer.

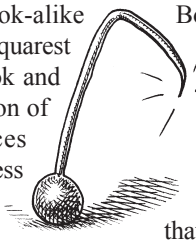
Take away the Hapsburg mystique of royalty, madness, and tragedy and all that's left is a "mean mouth." Fonda's became so synonymous with far-Left politics that conservatives long ago associated one with the other.

Stereotyping is now forbidden but Central Casting was built to last. Its ironclad rules are still with us and continue to govern our opinions and decisions whether we know it or not. George W. Bush is a classic example. He would not be quite so despised if he did not have the slitty eyes, thin lips, and pointy nose of the silent-film villain. Even worse is his "heh heh heh." It is not a laugh but a cackle, the standard accompaniment to the act of tying maidens to railroad tracks.

Florence King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

Moonlighting at Central Casting is a good way to study the political scene from a different angle, especially for columnists struggling to get through an election season with a remnant of sanity. Sometimes, when I'm sitting through a dreary must-watch show, I cast the candidates in old movies. Better yet, I play hooky and watch old movies on TCM, and convince myself that I'm really watching a must-watch show.

Last year I cast Mitt Romney in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Not the lead—I left Ronald Colman in that—but I gave Mitt a role that fit him like a glove: Charles Darnay, the liberal aristocrat or the aristocratic liberal, he couldn't decide which. The earnest Darnay was originally played by Romney's look-alike Donald Woods, who had the squarest jaw outside of a geometry book and came across as the male version of a teacher's pet who sacrifices himself on the altar of Neatness Counts.



Hillary Clinton had such a long run as a chameleon that she practically owned Central Casting. In 1992 she turned off so many people that she could have played all the parts in *The Women*. In her early White House years she was threatening, like one of those unfathomable, vaguely dangerous Middle European actresses with one name, like Valli in *The Paradine Case*. Next, she experimented with so many new images that she became a character actress with the range of Mildred Natwick, who played everything from the difficult chatelaine in *The Quiet Man* to the comically bustling clubwoman who tries to enlist Myrna Loy in her birth-control movement in *Cheaper by the Dozen*.

Hillary's primary fight and ultimate loss were her cinematic gain. After the bravura gutsiness she displayed, I'm giving her the lead in everything from *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* to *Mata Hari*.

Any movie starring John Edwards should end with someone saying, "Tap him and you'll get an echo." He seems like a character invented by those two great scripters of phonies, Budd Schulberg and Gore Vidal, but the requisite ruthlessness is missing. Nor, despite his eternal youth, is he right for Dorian Gray: The decadent creepiness just isn't there.

Edwards is that rarity, a sexless alpha male, so I cast him in the roles played by two actors with the same problem. One was Franchot Tone, the "Tennis, anyone?" scion who was always so terribly nice. The other was Robert Young, who managed to be unsexy even in *The Enchanted Cottage*, a fantasy about a cottage that transformed its repressed tenants into bedroom dynamos.

No movie would be complete without CNN's Lou Dobbs because he was in just about all of them under his stage name, Gene Lockhart. Name it and Lou's look-alike was in it: Stephen Douglas in *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol*, Custer's father-in-law in *They Died with Their Boots On*, the judge in *Miracle on 34th Street*. Lockhart played so many judges, mayors, aldermen, and big fish in little ponds that if all politics is local, then everything local is Lou Dobbs. This may explain his monomania on illegal immigration, which he expresses with a perfect imitation of Lockhart's pompous "Hrrrumph!"

The other night while watching *Suspicion* I started to worry about Cindy McCain. She looks tense lately. She also looks like Joan Fontaine and the theme of the movie is "How can he kill me? Let me count the ways." Being the same age as her husband, I know how tired he feels sometimes. Yes, he wants to kill somebody, but not her, so she should relax and remind herself that she may well be the deciding factor in who wins the election. A mantra might help: "Jane Fonda's mouth works in mysterious ways, its wonders to perform." **NR**

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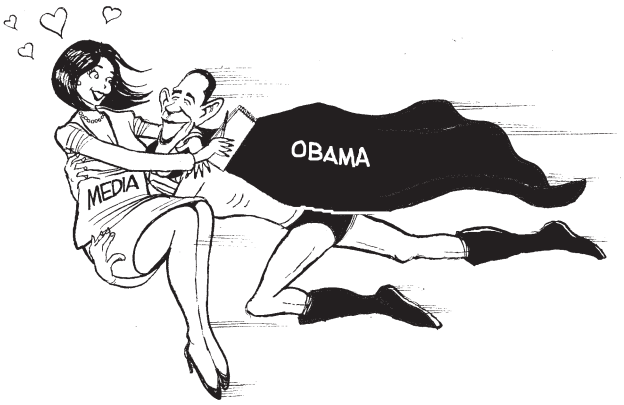
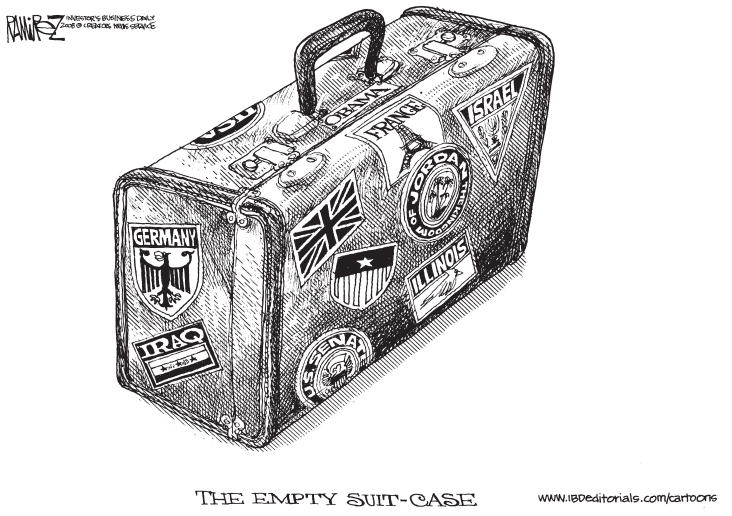
*"Are ye daft, mon?—*A Macintosh, *o'course!"*

"No, the Patriot Act doesn't make it all right for you to read your sister's diary!"





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THE NATIONAL REVIEW

Sailing November 8–15 on

2008 Post-Election Cruise

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as the brand new* Eurodam *visits Grand Turk, San Juan, St. Thomas, Half Moon Cay, and Ft. Lauderdale

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Fast forward to November 5th—the morning after. Whether you find yourself bemoaning four looming years of President Obama (or, for some, worrying if President-Elect McCain will keep his promises to conservatives), or whether you're flabbergasted by how a bigger and badder Democrat-controlled Capitol Hill will handle policy (or: you're stunned that the GOP picked up seats!), make sure you're packing your luggage and preparing for the *Eurodam*, your floating luxury getaway for scintillating discussion of the elections and their consequences—and on all other major current events (including the state of the U.S. economy) and trends.

NEW SPEAKERS
Fred Thompson,
Ed Whalen,
Stephen Spruiell
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Spend the week of November 8th raking leaves and cleaning gutters. Or, spend seven sunny days and cool nights sailing the balmy tropics, mixing and mingling with the crew of exemplary speakers we've assembled to make sense of electoral matters and the day's top issues. Confirmed speakers include former Senator **Fred Thompson**, former Massachusetts Gov. **Mitt Romney**, best-selling authors **Christopher Buckley** and **Mark Steyn**, historian **Victor Davis Hanson**, Islam scholar **Bernard Lewis**, former chief presidential speechwriter **William McGurn**, Club for Growth chief **Pat Toomey**, media critic **Brent Bozell**, esteemed columnists **Mona Charen** and **Deroy Murdock**, terrorism expert **Andrew McCarthy**, *Power Line* blog maestro **Scott Johnson**, constitutional law and judiciary expert **Ed Whalen**, Goldwater Institute chief **Darcy Olsen**, Acton Institute head **Fr. Robert Sirico**, humorist and commentator **Rob Long**, and from *NR*—*Liberal Fascism* author **Jonah Goldberg**, NRO editor **Kathryn Lopez**, former Washington Editor **Kate O'Beirne**, Senior Editors **Jay Nordlinger** and **Ramesh Ponnuru**, White House Correspondent **Byron York**, National Political Reporter **John J. Miller**, and NRO reporter **Stephen Spruiell**. *Wow!*

As *NR* cruise alumni (there are thousands, the "typical" one has gone on four of our *bon* voyages!) know, our trips are marked by riveting political shoptalk, wonderful socializing, intimate dining with our editors and speakers, making new friends, rekindling old friendships—and *grand* cruising. That's what's in store for *you* on the ***National Review* 2008 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise.**

Of the many reasons to come (over 340 cabins have already been booked!), none beats the luminaries who will be on board. This extraordinary gathering is one of the best ensembles we've ever had on an *NR* cruise, which guarantees that our seminar sessions (featuring ample audience "Q & A") will be fascinating.

✔ Imagine **Fred Thompson**, **Mitt Romney**, Club for Growth boss **Pat Toomey**, **William McGurn** (now sporting a *Wall Street Journal* column), and ace columnist **Mona Charen** providing their expert take on the elections, their consequences, and the state of the GOP.

✔ Some of the most rewarding *NR* cruise experiences have been the interchanges between **Bernard Lewis** and **Victor Davis Hanson** on the brutal revival of the age-old struggle between Islam and the West. These academic giants—along with terrorism expert **Andy McCarthy**—will provide their razor-sharp insights on America's dealings in Iraq, the Middle East, and the Muslim world.

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DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
Sat./Nov. 8	Ft. Lauderdale, FL		5:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Sun./Nov. 9	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
Mon./Nov. 10	Grand Turk,	7:00AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night smoker
Tue./Nov. 11	San Juan, Puerto Rico	10:00AM	11:00PM	
Wed./Nov. 12	St. Thomas, USVI	8:00AM	5:00PM	evening cocktail reception
	NEW: SPECIAL "NIGHT OWL" EVENT WITH STEYN, GOLDBERG, AND LONG!			
Thu./Nov. 13	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars late-night smoker
Fri./Nov. 14	Half Moon Cay	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Sat./Nov. 15	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00AM		

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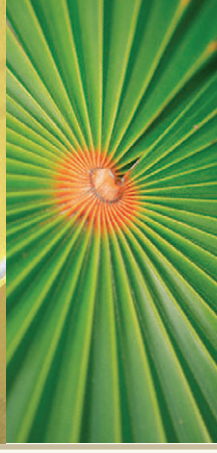

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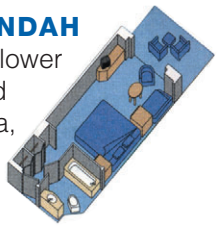
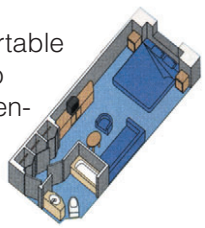


Spacious cabin (241 sq. ft.) . Two lower beds, convertible to 1 queen-sized bed, bathtub & shower, sitting area, private verandah, flat panel TV & DVD player mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows.

Categories VA / VB / VC
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,927 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,427

LARGE OCEAN VIEW



Comfortable quarters (190 sq. ft.) features two lower beds, convertible to 1 queen-sized bed, flat panel TV & DVD player, ocean view windows, bathtub and shower.

Category D
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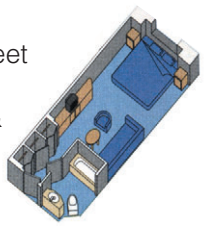

190 square feet Two lower beds, convertible to 1 queen-sized bed, flat panel TV & DVD player, bathtub / shower, floor to ceiling windows, view is fully obstructed by lifeboats.

Category GG
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✔ And they'll be joined in all the elucidating and analyzing of the 2008 elections by *NR*'s editorial heavyweights, including **Jonah Goldberg**, **Kathryn Jean Lopez**, **Kate O'Beirne**, **Ramesh Ponnuru**, **Jay Nordlinger**, **John Miller**, and **Stephen Spruiell**.

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PRIOR *to June 9, 2008 cancellation penalty is $75 per person*
June 9 to August 8, 2008 cancellation penalty is $500 per person
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the long view

ROB LONG

The Morning Call . . .

S. SCHMIDT: Are we all here?
R. DAVIS: I'm on.
C. BLACK: Me too.
S. SCHMIDT: And I've got the senator here too. He'll join us in a moment. But let's not wait, let's start. I think in general we're in pretty good shape. I think Obama's trip to Europe and the Middle East is starting to fade a bit, and people are starting to see the real person underneath all the hype.
R. DAVIS: Totally agree.
S. SCHMIDT: Did he look presidential? I guess, a little, if you're into that sort of thing. But what's the public going to remember? Obama in front of a huge crowd, or our guy in front of 6,000 pounds of bratwurst?
R. DAVIS: Our guy! Hands down!
S. SCHMIDT: Exactly! Obama in front of a cheering crowd is a snooze, frankly. Been there, done that, you know? But McCain and fatty sausages? Totally new image. Totally fresh. I really think we're going to clean this guy's clock.
[*New-caller chime*]
L. GRAHAM: Hey. Sorry I'm late for the call.
R. DAVIS: No problem, Lindsey. We were just filling in the senator on some of the great news about the campaign.
L. GRAHAM: Wonderful! It's going so well, really.
S. SCHMIDT: Sort of textbook, actually.
L. GRAHAM: I just got off the phone with some of the news directors at the various networks, and what's really great is that they're starting to get a little tired of all of this back-to-back Obama stuff, and they promised me that they're going to get a lot more balanced starting right now.
C. BLACK: That's fantastic news!
R. DAVIS: What a great piece of news! Thanks, Lindsey, for sharing that. Could this day be going better?
C. BLACK: I don't see how.
S. SCHMIDT: Well, now, hold your horses. Let's not get cocky, okay? I mean, look, anything could happen. We're in great shape, we have our opponent riding high on a sea of poll numbers, press coverage, momentum, voter dissatisfaction, energy, and fundraising, which is right where we want him, but that doesn't mean we've got this thing sewn up, okay? Remember, people, there's a lot . . .
C. BLACK/R. DAVIS/L. GRAHAM: . . . of slip between the cup and the lip!
[*Laughter, applause*]
L. GRAHAM: Steve, you kill me!
C. BLACK: Such a worrier!
R. DAVIS: I'd tell you that you were going to lose your hair if you had any to lose!
S. SCHMIDT: Haha, guys, but seriously, you know, this guy we're up against is going to be a formidable opponent, I think.
L. GRAHAM: What are you talking about? He's only 20 points ahead in most polls! He's only raising more money! Let's not go crazy here. It'll all tighten up in October. My thinking is, let's lie low until then.

C. BLACK: I agree. When's the next golf-cart photo-op for our guy? We need some more of those.
R. DAVIS: Can we get more photo-ops with meat or meat products? I think we're getting good traction with those.
L. GRAHAM: And what about senior citizens? Powerful voting group. Are we reaching out enough to them?
C. BLACK: My thinking is, let's take the rest of the summer and stay under the radar. Quiet things down. Let the other guy take the spotlight for a bit.
L. GRAHAM: Who knows? Maybe he'll make some kind of mistake or misstep.
R. DAVIS: Of course he will. I mean, probably.
L. GRAHAM: And then we swoop in and say, "Hey! Remember us? Hello? Yoo-hoo! We're here, too! We're the other party you haven't been hearing so much about. And boy do we have a candidate for you! The other guy is kind of scary, huh? Well, try us on for size!" Or something. We'll let the message guys figure that one out.
C. BLACK: Good plan.
L. GRAHAM: Thanks! I have a magical elf who lives under my stairs, and he's been giving me some great strategy.
C. BLACK: Terrific!
R. DAVIS: I like it.
S. SCHMIDT: I like it because it's so proactive.
L. GRAHAM: Exactly. And in politics, you gotta be proactive.
R. DAVIS: Guys! I wish you could sit here and see this view from my office! Two wonderful purple unicorns just danced by in a wondrous spray of glitter and rainbows!
C. BLACK: I think this is a sign! We're a lock!
L. GRAHAM: That's what my magical elf says!
S. SCHMIDT: My psychic had a vision of the senator getting inaugurated last night. And she's very, very rarely wrong, if ever.
C. BLACK: Wow. Goosebump city. I don't know about magical elves and unicorns and psychics, but I do know that the wife and I got out the Ouija board last night and according to that, we're going to carry Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida, New Hampshire, and most of the Northwest.
S. SCHMIDT: Take it to the bank! Start shopping for D.C. real estate, fellas!
C. BLACK: You know what this reminds me of? The Ford campaign of 1976. Good times.
R. DAVIS: I thought you were going to say Bush in 1992! Remember that? Such a wonderful sense of possibility.
C. BLACK: Boy, do I. What a perfect campaign.
L. GRAHAM: Let's not forget Dole in 1996. They'll be teaching that one in school.
S. SCHMIDT: Gosh, there's so much wonderful history here! So many elder elder statesmen! The other guy must be so jealous of the more than a hundred years of experience we've got working on our side!
[*New-caller chime*]
JM: Guys?
S. SCHMIDT: Yes, senator?
JM: Sorry I'm late. Did I miss anything?
S. SCHMIDT: It's all under control, boss.

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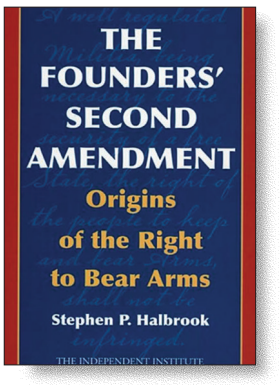
Right from The Start



The Founders' Second Amendment: Origins of the Right to Bear Arms, by Stephen P. Halbrook (Ivan R. Dee, 448 pp., $28.95)

NELSON LUND

Stephen P. Halbrook is a giant among Second Amendment scholars. During the 1980s, he and a tiny group of fellow iconoclasts challenged a well-settled consensus in academia and the courts. According to that consensus, the Second Amendment is an historical anachronism that gives individual American citizens no right at all to keep and bear arms. Although initially ignored by the legal establishment, the early work of Halbrook and his allies demonstrated that the elite consensus was built on nothing but hot air.

As the Supreme Court's recent decision in *District of Columbia* v. *Heller* vividly illustrates, the smug dismissal of the Second Amendment's importance and vitality is no longer tenable. For the first time in our history, the Supreme Court has found that a gun-control statute violated the Second Amendment, and it did so largely on the basis of the kind of original-meaning historical analysis that Halbrook pioneered. Nobody has been more persistent or more prolific than Halbrook in the long intellectual campaign that made this victory possible. Whatever may happen in future litigation, Halbrook deserves the gratitude of everyone who thinks that the Constitution deserves to be taken seriously as law.

Mr. Lund is a professor at George Mason University School of Law.

Halbrook has now produced a book that only he could have written. *The Founders' Second Amendment*, for which I served as a peer reviewer, is a comprehensive study of the legislative history of this quintessentially American constitutional provision. Aimed at both a general and a professional audience, Halbrook's work has several valuable qualities that are often absent from modern legal and historical scholarship.

First, it is highly readable. Anyone who has been called on to explain the genesis of a law knows how difficult it can be to combine completeness with clarity. Halbrook has not only succeeded in this difficult task, he has made the story interesting as well.

The volume doesn't stop with the usual materials of a legislative history—i.e., general background, legislative debates, and public commentary by prominent participants in the process. Halbrook seems to have read everything ever written by or about the people who were involved in the story he tells, including obscure records and pamphlets as well as private letters and diaries. In many cases, these documents help to fill gaps in the standard sources, and throw new light on materials that are often read in isolation.

Finally, Halbrook is not afraid to quote liberally from the documents on which he relies. A number of professional historians have written about the Second Amendment, and all too often they ask the reader to take their word for what the framers intended. The idea seems to be that these professors have immersed themselves in the history of the times, and emerged with the uncanny ability to tell the rest of us how the framers would have answered questions that they apparently didn't ask. Halbrook lets the actors in his story speak for themselves, and the reader is free to conclude (as I occasionally do) that his interpretation of what they said is questionable or even wrong. That makes his work a lot more useful and a lot more reliable than much of what has been written by members of the professional guild.

What then do we learn from Halbrook? Without pretending to offer an adequate summary, I can point to a few highlights.

First, the American consciousness was deeply impressed with the role of the armed citizenry in the American Revolution. As every schoolchild knows, the Revolution was ignited when British troops were sent to Concord, Mass., to confiscate arms and ammunition belonging to the people of that town. After engaging armed militiamen at Lexington, the British executed their mission, but were harassed by skirmishers (including women and children) almost all the way back to Boston. Within days, the British began attempting to disarm the entire population of Boston, an outrage that fanned resentment there and throughout the colonies.

The American consciousness was deeply impressed with the role of the armed citizenry in the American Revolution.

These and related experiences left the founding generation with a strong aversion to peacetime standing armies, and with a preference for the citizen militia as an alternative that would be much less threatening to civil liberty. In 1787, when Americans began to consider adopting a greatly strengthened central government, they faced a knotty problem. The more power the new government was given to provide for national security, the more danger there would be that this power would be put to oppressive uses domestically. In the end, the

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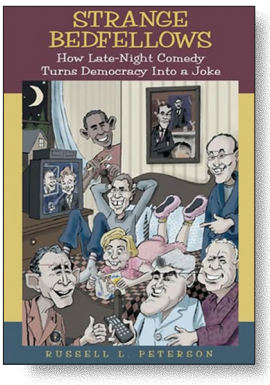
Constitution gave Congress virtually plenary authority to raise professional armies and to control the part-time militia, and this was one of the principal complaints of the Anti-Federalists.

The Second Amendment was a response to those complaints. Halbrook's history shows that virtually all of the relevant discussion leading up to the Bill of Rights revolved around the fear that the federal government would seek to disarm American citizens, leaving the population vulnerable to federal oppression. There was, however, no agreed way to prevent this. Some thought that constitutional limits should be placed on congressional authority, such as a ban on peacetime armies. Some thought that the right of the states to maintain and control militia organizations should be specified in the Constitution. Some thought that the right of the people to keep and bear their own private arms should be expressly protected. Others thought that nothing need be done because the federal government had no authority to disarm Americans, and would never be able to raise an army powerful enough to subdue our armed populace.

Notably absent from discussions during the founding era was any suggestion that the federal government had, or should have, any authority to disarm the citizenry. Nor did anyone raise the possibility that the federal government would need, or even desire, to regulate the possession or use of weapons in an effort to reduce crime. Today's debates about gun control and the Second Amendment are largely concerned with questions that the founding generation never asked.

Neither we nor our courts will find all the answers we need in the history that Halbrook presents so well. But this is the place to start looking, because some very important preliminary questions are indeed answered here. Every American who cares about this provision of the Constitution can now arm himself against the sophistries and oversimplifications that have permeated much of the popular and professional discourse about the origins of the Second Amendment. Doing so would be a fitting tribute to those who set us on the road to freedom at Lexington and Concord. **NR**

The Last Laugh?



Strange Bedfellows: How Late-Night Comedy Turns Democracy into a Joke, by Russell L. Peterson (Rutgers, 272 pp., $24.95)

ZACK MUNSON

If it is indeed a fact that more Americans get their daily dose of news from Jay Leno, Dave Letterman, and Jon Stewart than from Brian Williams, Katie Couric, and the *New York Times*, that raises a number of questions: Why do we now abjure traditional news outlets? How skewed is our perception of current events? What does this mean for our democracy? And, of course: Are we doomed?

Russell Peterson's *Strange Bedfellows* doesn't go so far as to tell us what the future of our democracy holds. Peterson, a professor of American studies at the University of Iowa, has written a thoroughly researched and sometimes quite engaging critique of the role of late-night comedy in our public life—but his political prejudice leads him to a number of contradictory conclusions, and, as to whether or not we are doomed, he replies with a resounding, unequivocal . . . *that depends*.

Peterson asserts that most topical television comedy (and news, for that matter) is in fact anti-political. Unlike, say, Jon Stewart, who is blatantly partisan and issue-oriented, Leno, Letterman, Conan O'Brien, and the impressionists of *Saturday Night Live* simply mock our elected leaders' *personalities*. And their insistence on being "equal-opportunity offenders," so as not to alienate their audience, ends up impugning politics as a dirty game to be avoided. As Peterson says, "The bottom line of all the jokes about Bush's dumbness, Kerry's dullness, [and] Al Gore's stiffness . . . is that all politicians are created equal—equally unworthy, that is—and that no matter who wins the election, the American people lose."

This attitude is not new, as Peterson makes plain. He cites numerous examples of what he calls "pseudo-satire," from Will Rogers to Bob Hope to Johnny Carson. These comics played on the personal foibles of politicians—their voices and mannerisms, their family lives, their pets. He contrasts this with the genuine satire of Lenny Bruce, Mort Sahl, Tom Lehrer, and others, who took dead aim at real political actions. He even takes us all the way back to two of Abe Lincoln's favorites, Artemus Ward (pseudo-satire) and Petroleum V. Nasby (genuine satire).

As an ex-comedian, Peterson certainly

Mr. Munson is a comedian and writer living in Washington, D.C.

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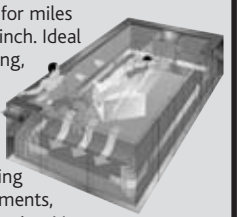

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knows comedy. And his analysis is often spot-on, with writing to match. In laying out the difference between pseudo-satire and the genuine article, he remarks: "The critical distinction . . . has less to do with content than with *in*tent. To put it another way, while the genuine satirist and the pseudo-satirist are both joking, only one of them is kidding. Real satire means it." In discussing the decline in television decency standards, he observes: "Nowadays, sex jokes are primetime staples—but politics still has to wait till the kids have gone to bed." Most television critics would do well to emulate such concise and understated analysis.

But despite these flashes of analytical skill, the book is poorly organized and often confusing. Peterson has a tendency to get bogged down in academic abstractions. (For example: "Comedy cannot exist without a certain amount of repression. Indeed, in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Freud argued that social sanctions against open expressions of lust and aggression were the whole reason people needed jokes.") There are more references to the philosopher Henri Bergson than to Lorne Michaels and Dave Chappelle. In a book about comedy, this is problematic. And while each chapter has a number of interesting reflections and descriptions, neither these, nor the chapters themselves, are linked together clearly. The book is not organized chronologically, or by genre, or even in order of significance to Peterson's thesis. The theme of the book's title is restated about 50 times: "By avoiding issues in favor of personalities, and by 'balancing' these shallow criticisms between conservatives and liberals, late-night comics are playing it safe but endangering democracy." And yet, again and again, he fails to tell us how. He tells us much about what comics do, but little of what that actually does to our democracy.

Well, that is not *entirely* true. While he fails to state exactly how our democracy will collapse under the strain of one too many monologues, he does trace the worst of our nation's ills back to . . . conservatives. The book is full of little anti-Bush barbs, cracks about missing WMDs, and cranky references to Fox News. And this rather gleeful axe-grinding, though at first separate from his analysis, eventually begins to shape his conclusions. While he argues forcefully that genuine satirists "could use their uniquely appealing forum and the concision of comedy to help clarify the political world," his love of satire seems only to extend to those comics whose political views dovetail nicely with his own. He admires the liberal Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart, and he is sympathetic to Left-libertarian Bill Maher. But he is harshly critical of *South Park* creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone's "mockery of liberal pieties"; he rails against Dennis Miller; he bemoans the "irresponsible iconoclasm" of Sarah Silverman. When faced with those whose satire cuts against his political grain, he huffs and puffs and tries to blow their house down:

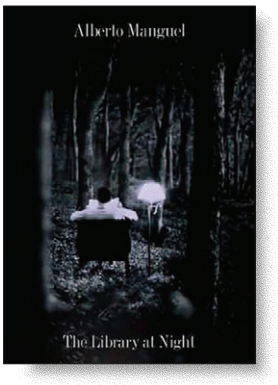
> By making "political correctness"—rather than bigotry, homophobia, sexism, and cruelty—the primary target, "edgy" comedy has moved our discourse in a mostly *illiberal* direction. The critical—or rather *un*critical—praise that has been heaped upon . . . Silverman, *Family Guy*, Parker and Stone, et al. has not only inflated the reputations of a fair number of artists insufficiently talented to succeed without shock, it has also helped enable a revival of a much uglier kind of humor by providing the pretense that merely violating taboos is a worthy end in itself.

He dismisses the "widespread assumption that challenging taboos is 'liberating,' and thus inherently 'liberal.'" Further, he asserts that the purpose of satire is positive change. Of what, pray tell, could such positive change consist? He flatly declares that "without a clearly defined, *progressive agenda*, opening such previously closed avenues for comic exploration is merely opening Pandora's box." (Italics added.)

In the end, Peterson simply tells us what *he* wishes satire would do, as when he applauds comedian Chris Rock for being "not just politically incorrect but *political*, and progressive." Those are Peterson's italics, but he seems to have missed his own point. *Strange Bedfellows* makes the case that satire is worthwhile only when backed by "progressive" politics. If satire happens to fall into the wrong (read: conservative) hands, it is a menace, and in fact is no longer "genuine" satire at all.

Odd—a book extolling the virtue and necessity of satire that laments the violation of taboos, and warns of the dangers of free speech. Of course, equating a "progressive agenda" with "positive change" is Peterson's right as a free-thinking member of our great democracy. If only he were so liberal as to grant conservatives the right to disagree, and to laugh about it. **NR**

Books Do Furnish . . .



The Library at Night,
by Alberto Manguel
(Yale, 384 pp., $27.50)

TRACY LEE SIMMONS

EVERYBODY is the butt of at least one family joke. The one repeated at my expense has it that one day, soon after I got my driver's license, my older brother, by then in his twenties—and a much cooler guy than I would ever be—remarked with exasperation to my mother, "I would let Tracy borrow my car to go out and meet a girl somewhere, but I'm afraid he would just take it to the library." The line cuts two ways. No doubt a self-respecting dude like him probably didn't want to risk his legion of friends spotting his sporty Camaro parked near the local library. But the larger laughing point is that I was too studious for my own good. While I suspect the first point to be true, I happen to know the second is not.

Indeed I was a happy habitué of the public library from the moment I was old enough to ride the city bus by myself, but my deflating disclosure is that I usually didn't go there to study; in fact, I rarely did. Visiting the library was for me—along with swimming and hiking in the woods—an exercise in pure leisure.

Mr. Simmons is director of the Dow Journalism Program at Hillsdale College, and author of *Climbing Parnassus: A New Apologia for Greek and Latin*.

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Certainly I fed my own pet interests at the history and literature shelves, but mostly I was browsing quietly, intently, reading about wars, staring at paintings, listening to Bach (a discovery I'd not confess for years), generally learning about things I'd not heard of before but that were, to this novice, tantalizing to the touch. Not the most dissipated way for an idle adolescent to spend part of a Saturday, I'll admit, but I still considered the hours spent in the library to be, essentially, play time.

So, basically, does Alberto Manguel, the prolific Argentinean-born essayist, anthologist, and translator—though to his more mature mind the time spent amid the book-lined rows affords far more than diversion. With *The Library at Night* he offers an elaborate meditation on the use and meaning of libraries, both real and imaginary. It's also an extended meditation on life itself, an exploration of the inner life each of us sustains, often bashfully and in secret, and that our personal libraries go far, for better or worse, to reveal. Manguel dubs the book "an account of my astonishment" at the world's riches, and its title springs from his languorous penchant for night reading in pools of solitary light within the cavernous darkness of his own library, the one time in the 24-hour cycle when, he says, "the world can be comfortably reimagined."

And what a place this is for imagining anything. Converted from a barn—one wall of which, according to local legend, once served as part of a battlement for a castle—in the Loire valley of France, this airy 15th-century space Manguel has revivified as a well if somewhat arbitrarily ordered, humane dwelling-place. It's a warehouse of words and deeds and pictures: a repository of memory, both his and the world's, those large patches of the world's experience with which this cultivated polymath has made himself intimately familiar.

The romance of the stacks isn't entirely personal. Institutional libraries through the centuries, imperial and public alike, have long pursued ideals of comprehensiveness and order, which the highest, most renowned collections have embodied. Manguel dilates anecdotally on the most famous libraries, beginning with the one now practically lost to fable, that of Alexandria in Egypt, built in the third century B.C., above whose shelves was to be found the vatic inscription "The place of the cure of the soul," no small reminder of the mythical power once invested in learning and in the places appointed to house its treasures. From this library's "splendid ambition," he says, we can learn how "what was one man's experience can become, through the alchemy of words, the experience of all."

Manguel allows himself to wander, examining the architecture of Michelangelo's Laurentian Library in Florence and musing on the ideals for its use thereby conveyed; he tells the story of Panizzi's designs for the British Museum, and even, in tribute to our common experience of modern libraries, recounts how Melvil Dewey devised his famous system of classification, "which lends the spines of books the aspect of license plates on rows of parked cars." He throws light on the benefactions of the millionaire industrialists of the 19th century, principally Andrew Carnegie, who funded libraries that have provided intellectual nourishment for generations, including the likes of the young Eudora Welty and John Updike. Finally, and most improbably and movingly, he describes the books made available in concentration camps, books preserved by the Nazis after their readers had been slaughtered.

The library, no matter how comprehensive it aspires to be, has always held at its core some principle of selection, and selection entails exclusion.

But, in the end, "every library is autobiographical," and the libraries we make for ourselves carry within them the spiritual and intellectual DNA of their creators. Far from being merely the territory of ideas and abstractions, an arid desert, a personal library feeds the senses; within his own book-lined walls, Manguel seeks "to touch the pages, to hear the crinkle and the rustle of the paper and the fearful crack of the spine, to smell the wood of the shelves, the musky perfume of the leather bindings." Yet these places, where the fancy can range freely and memory be tapped, can transport us to other worlds, deposit us on their shores, and bring us back.

So surely, one might think, the paradise of cyberspace comes to us now offering one gargantuan library, a fulfillment of all ancient dreams of complete and graspable knowledge. But Manguel, no enemy of the Internet, weighs in here with moderate yet piercing warnings. "The accumulation of knowledge isn't knowledge," he tells us, and still less is knowledge the mindless accumulation of information, much of it sketchy and inaccurate. Cyberspace, so helpful in myriad ways, is no library. The inescapable predicament of the Internet is the grim, relentless equality of all entries: No hierarchy reigns; every item is just as reliable as another. Call it the still, sad fact of democracy.

Yet the library, no matter how comprehensive and complete it aspires to be, has always held at its core some principle of selection, and selection entails exclusion. The Web stresses "velocity over reflection and brevity over complexity"; it prefers "snippets of news and bytes of facts over lengthy discussions and elaborate dossiers, and . . . dilut[es] informed opinion with reams of inane babble, ineffectual advice, inaccurate facts, and trivial information." "If the Library of Alexandria was the emblem of our ambition of omniscience," Manguel sums up, "the Web is the emblem of our ambition of omnipresence; the library that contained everything has become the library that contains anything."

Ideally we are to be, Manguel argues in the end, citizens of a larger city, readers who can look forward competently because we can look back imaginatively, people for whom the past, enlivened for us in our libraries by books, art, music, and ideas, becomes a homeland of sorts, yet one in which each of us remains an individual, unique, because each has taken upon himself the glorious burden of discovery and self-cultivation, neither always systematic. No duplicates reside in this city. "For the cosmopolitan reader," the reflective man and woman, "a homeland is not in space, fractured by political frontiers, but in time, which has no borders"—or no borders that cannot be breached by the learned, curious, and well-grounded imagination—though such dreams seem to weave themselves better at night in the hopeful, comforting presence of one's own books in one's own room. **NR**

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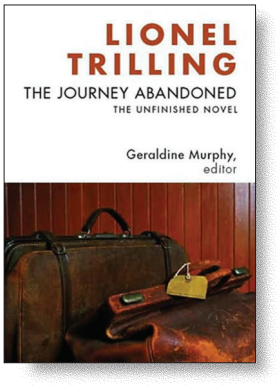

The Journey Abandoned: The Unfinished Novel, by Lionel Trilling, edited by Geraldine Murphy (Columbia, 224 pp., $26.95)

M. D. AESCHLIMAN

A combination of internal and external factors drove Lionel Trilling (1905–1975) to become one of the most important American moralists of the 20th century, alongside rival figures such as William James, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Dewey, and Sidney Hook. Trilling's body of writing is a permanent asset to American letters and political history.

A graduate of Columbia University and long an esteemed professor and presence there, Trilling also held visiting lectureships at Harvard and Oxford. His dissertation on Matthew Arnold was published in 1939 and put him in the intellectual company of Irving Babbitt and his most famous student, T. S. Eliot. Arnold's interests in literature, politics, education, and ethics were to be as central to the liberal Trilling as to the conservatives Babbitt and Eliot.

Trilling became best known as a literary critic, with volumes of his essays—*The Liberal Imagination* (1950), *The Opposing Self* (1955), *A Gathering of Fugitives* (1956), and *Beyond Culture* (1965)—becoming major works of cultural criticism that affected not only the interpretation and teaching of literature but the sensibilities of a large readership in other academic fields, in the American intelligentsia at large, and in England too. His anthologies with commentaries—*The Portable Matthew Arnold* (1949), *The Experience of Literature* (1967), and *Literary Criticism: An Introductory Reader* (1970)—became major textbooks for the teaching of literature. His 1969–70 Norton Lectures at Harvard were published as *Sincerity and Authenticity* in 1972, the same year that he delivered the Thomas Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities in Washington, D.C. He died of cancer in 1975. His widow, Diana Trilling, outlived him by two decades and edited a new, standard edition of his writings.

Yet apart from a well-received but brief study of E. M. Forster in 1943, after the Arnold volume Trilling never really published another major, extended nonfiction work. His real interest throughout most of the 1940s and early 1950s was in writing fiction, and in this endeavor he had one triumph: *The Middle of the Journey* (1947). Together with Trilling's own 1975 introduction to the reprint of the novel, it deserves to be more widely known and read. Not only a fine novel, it is a moral and historical document of great integrity and importance.

Among Trilling's papers left to the Columbia library after the death in 1996 of Diana Trilling, the scholar Geraldine Murphy recently discovered an unfinished novel by Trilling—which she has now carefully edited, introduced, and published under the title *The Journey Abandoned*. After the equivocal, disappointing response to *The Middle of the Journey* in 1947 he did not finish this earlier manuscript, worked on for a long period in the 1940s.

In her memoir, *The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana and Lionel Trilling* (1993), Diana Trilling tells us with surprise that her husband wrote *The Middle of the Journey* very rapidly and almost completely without her knowledge. The initial interest of this novel has chiefly to do with its historical and topical character: One of its protagonists, Gifford Maxim, is closely modeled on Whittaker Chambers, whom Trilling knew well, and two other characters bear an uncanny resemblance to Alger and Priscilla Hiss, whom he did not know at all. Within two years of the novel's publication, the Hiss-Chambers case was to become international news. The conviction of the handsome, prominent New Dealer and establishment-liberal statesman Hiss of perjury on the basis of the accusations of the disheveled, apocalyptic ex-Communist Chambers was to become *the* American trial of the 20th century, enduringly dividing the American intelligentsia.

The Middle of the Journey depicts the passionate, renegade ex–Communist spy Gifford Maxim and the earnest, "fellow-traveling," Communist-sympathizing couple the Crooms (the Hiss parallels) through the eyes of another character named John Laskell. Himself a former Communist sympathizer who has recently experienced the death of a loved one and his own near-death, Laskell is still a liberal, but an increasingly half-hearted and quiescent one who has become intensely aware of life's complexities and the value of a kind of ethical and aesthetic self-possession. The title *The Middle of the Journey* alludes to the opening of Dante's *Commedia*, in which the narrator describes himself as having what we would call a "mid-life crisis." The main stances toward life—and the main social roles in mid-century America—are depicted with great insight. Though the liberal Laskell is clearly Trilling's voice, the Chambers figure is depicted with great sympathy and power. One reviewer rightly credited the novel with "a depth that recalls Dostoevsky and a subtlety worthy of Henry James," and called it "the most important novel by a non-genius since Forster's *A Passage to India*" (1924).

Yet the American reviews were mixed and the sales of the first edition limited; it was not to be republished in the U.S. until 1975, the year of Trilling's death, though there was a British Penguin paperback in 1963. The novel pleased neither the dominant, Left-liberal, New York–oriented intelligentsia, nor the strenuous avant-garde looking for spectacular genius, nor the more traditional, simpler sensibility of the country at large. Character, ideas, and sentiments were too carefully modulated and observed for a schematic ideological conclusion to be possible.

In her introduction to the newly

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published unfinished novel, Geraldine Murphy speculates on why Trilling abandoned it after the publication of *The Middle of the Journey*: "Did he lose faith in it? . . . The end of Trilling's career as a creative writer is . . . a mystery." But I think it is less mysterious than Murphy does. Diana Trilling's 1993 memoir indicates that he was disappointed at the initial reception of *The Middle of the Journey*, but even more disappointed and puzzled at the refusal of his publisher, the Viking Press, to consider republishing it two years later, when the Hiss-Chambers case dominated the media for many months. It was many years later, long after her husband's death, that Diana Trilling discovered that the chief publisher at Viking, B. W. Huebsch, was a Communist who had privately volunteered to help the Hiss defense. The evidence provided in Diana's memoir strongly supports the conclusion that Huebsch and others at Viking prevented a reprint of *The Middle of the Journey*—one that would certainly have been timely and profitable—out of ideological antagonism. It is little wonder that the discouraged Trilling gave up further attempts to write fiction after this depressing outcome, whose likely cause he never knew.

The introduction to the 2002 reprint in the New York Review Books Classics series is by Monroe Engel, whom the book identifies as "Lionel Trilling's editor at the Viking Press in 1947, when *The Middle of the Journey* was published." Yet, in her memoir, Diana Trilling—who was in full possession of his correspondence with Viking—mentions by name the two editors and others at Viking with whom her husband dealt over his many years of association with the publisher. Monroe Engel is not among them. In any case, if Diana Trilling's claims about her husband's shabby treatment at Viking were false, why didn't Engel—Trilling's supposed editor—try to refute them?

The speed and certainty with which Trilling finished the 1947 novel had much to do with his longstanding personal acquaintance with the Dostoevskyan Chambers and his dramatic, tormented, apocalyptic life; with Trilling's and his wife's intense disenchantment with "fellow-traveling," pro-Russian "progressivism" that would soon be represented by the Henry Wallace presidential campaign of 1948; and with the press of contemporary Communist expansion in Asia and eastern Europe (Trilling's father and both of his wife's parents were Polish-Jewish immigrants). These factors propelled Trilling into becoming, however reluctantly, a moralist.

Of what he might have become as a writer of fiction if these external and internal factors had not coalesced in 1947, the unfinished *Journey Abandoned* provides valuable evidence. It consists of about a third of a projected novel. Its principal focus is on a young midwestern intellectual desirous of making it in the East as a writer who gets an unexpected opportunity to do so. Its social observation is very deft, but its characters (other than the protagonist), its theme, and its plot are hardly developed and seem effete, in the coterie mode of Virginia Woolf and Forster. The marvel is that *The Middle of the Journey* would soon spring so confidently and rapidly from the same pen.

Trilling was profoundly ambivalent about the anarchic imaginative violence or extremism of modernist literary geniuses such as Kafka, Gide, Yeats, Lawrence, and Hemingway.

Trilling was the beau ideal of the avant-garde critical sensibility in the 1940s, in the essays that were gathered into *The Liberal Imagination* and in his 1943 book on Forster. Yet he was profoundly ambivalent about the anarchic imaginative violence or extremism of modernist literary geniuses such as Kafka, Gide, Yeats, Lawrence, and Hemingway; it was an ambivalence about "the modern element in modern literature" that was to become increasingly evident throughout his career as a teacher and critic, leading the literary critic Morris Dickstein to describe it as "the cultured conservatism of the late Trilling." In his search for models of a different approach, Trilling fastened on Henry James and Forster. Forster, in his telling, was a liberal moral realist who could be put to use against the agitprop of the Marxists and the existential immoralism of the moderns. Trilling was, like his friend Niebuhr, an astute critic of the grossly reductionist Kinsey Report on American sexuality, and wanted to avoid the implications of what Niebuhr called "a consistent naturalism and its logical fruit, a crude hedonism, in terms of which the achievement of orgasm becomes the summum bonum of [the] value scheme." James and Forster seemed to promise this moral-aesthetic realism and avoidance of hedonism, extremity, and absolutism.

Yet Trilling's book on Forster ignored the moral direction of Bloomsbury-Cambridge aestheticism—what F. R. Leavis repeatedly deplored in it and what its chief figure, John Maynard Keynes, approvingly called its "immoralism": It was a "homintern" that was to bear fruit in the Cambridge Soviet spies. In William Barrett's brilliant memoir of the New York intellectuals, *The Truants: Adventures among the Intellectuals* (1982), Barrett describes Trilling's first meeting with Forster, which took place while the latter was quietly visiting New York with his homosexual lover after World War II. Trilling was deeply shocked to have to meet Forster and his homosexual friend "in an apartment-loft . . . downtown . . . in the East Village in the midst of a party of homosexuals," in a "gay atmosphere [in which] Forster let himself go entirely." This glimpse may have given an unexpected, distasteful force to Forster's famous remark that if he had to choose between betraying his friend or his country, he would betray his country. Trilling's reliable liberal moralist was not very reliable after all. And the "friends" Philby, Burgess, Maclean, and Blunt certainly did not betray each other; they betrayed Britain to the Soviet Union instead.

However interesting a document *The Journey Abandoned* is, its chief use is to remind us of how different—and how fine and complete—a novel *The Middle of the Journey* is. Instead of imitating the decadent, self-reflective, coterie-riddled, hothouse aestheticism of Forster, Bloomsbury, and Cambridge, with its nihilistic moral and political implications, Trilling's finished novel achieves a deeply felt moral realism that makes it an indispensable landmark in modern American literature and a document of extraordinary moral and historical importance. **NR**

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■ ESSAY ■

A Grammar Of Ascent

JASON LEE STEORTS

O the mind, mind has mountains . . .
—Gerard Manley Hopkins

I WONDER about the choices we make to get on the margins of reality. There are many realities, and many vanishing points, but the one on my mind right now is mountaineering.

I recently spent a week in Alaska trying to learn how to be a mountaineer. I did not succeed very well, and the details are not very interesting. I finished the course (I was enrolled in a course) thinking that perhaps I am better off remaining a slightly-above-average mountain dilettante. An occasional rock climber. A good skier (preferably on teles, sometimes where there are no lifts). And always within a half hour of a dinner that requires a tip. Real mountaineering tends probabilistically—for the odds, ask an actuary—toward death. As also toward the loss of fingers and toes. I like my fingers and my toes and, *ceteris paribus*, prefer realities in which I have ten of each.

But I find mountaineers seductive, in the sense of admiring them and occasionally wishing to be one. What appeals to me is not the courage (some would substitute "foolishness") of risking death for a trivial end. It is rather the way they use words.

They use them efficiently and compassionately, and with a great deal of intelligence. Which is how you'd want to hear them if you were lost above 8,000 meters, your mind and body were not working right, and a voice from somewhere—a radio, a rescue party—were commanding you to live and explaining how.

I also like the way mountaineering cuts through the metaphors that accrete to "existential questions." Or I guess death is what does that. Mountaineering's contribution is to help one imagine death vividly.

* * *

I am not a mountaineer, and there are many vanishing points. If I had once been stranded on a precipice of life, death, and thought, and if later I found myself in radio contact with someone so situated, I might talk like this:

Reality is real, and you are part of it.

This is called "metaphysics."

You don't know how you got here and you don't know where you're going. If we're being rigorous (and we could get very rigorous, but that would take lots of words), you don't even know who you are, or who I am, or what you are and I am, or what reality is. No one else knows, either. We are stumbling through the dark, to what end we know not, and he who claims to know is mistaken at best.

This is called "epistemology."

You should freely choose to treat others as you wish to be treated, instead of shoving with hands or words. But if you press me hard on what "should" means, I won't be able to say much.

This is called "ethics."

Metaphysics, epistemology, ethics. These three are called "philosophy," and thus is the sum of their content. The rest is something called "prudence," and it can't be explained very easily. But part of it is this:

Be careful not to get lost here. Use your head and your heart and go try to be happy somewhere. In whatever reality looks promising to you. Don't waste your time poking around the limits of your realities, the limits of all possible realities, looking for what can't be seen.

And don't worry too much. When someone tells you he's seen past the limits and the news is bad, remember epistemology, then shrug.

* * *

Some mountaineers cannot escape the mountains. They enter by choice, but the mountains become a tomb (literally) or a prison (metaphorically). It is hard to live in conventionally comfortable realities as a mountaineer. The pay isn't good. Free markets tend not to reward trivial ends. Mountaineers are in this sense like philosophers.

All the same I am grateful for what they have taught me. I am grateful too for those who venture toward the margins—notwithstanding this is lonely, and exhausting, and sometimes dangerous—in order to remind floundering intelligences that they are lost, and to suggest a way home. The way will be familiar ("circularity"), but a rescued man tends not to complain.

* * *

One day we got stuck in camp. White glacier below us, white fog all around us, white snowflakes driven here and there by incalculable forces known as "the wind." Visibility was a few dozen feet. The only color we could see was the bright orange of our tents and the bright green feathers on the chest of a small bird.

"Lost," said one of our guides. "Can't see in the fog. Circling above us because he can see the tents. Probably freeze to death."

We nodded.

"Poor little thing." (This was muttered quickly, with compassion.)

In my mind I said a prayer for the bird, talking as I do when someone might hear. Eventually it gave up on the tents and vanished into white. **NR**

WALPURGISNACHT

Engrossed in her dark climacteric,
How the earth heaves and groans—
Shrieking across the obscure moon
Ride the withered-up, hot-hunkered crones.

Ride to your black mount in the sky
You witches I hate
With all the wild fury of lust
Of itself infatuate.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

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■ FILM ■

Too Many Rules

ROSS DOUTHAT

If we can all agree to pretend that *Batman Forever* and *Batman and Robin* never happened—and with apologies to George Clooney's nippled, codpieced Batsuit and Arnold Schwarzenegger's indelible performance as Mr. Freeze, I'm pretty sure we can—then just two directors, Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan, have had a crack at the Batman mythos in the last two decades, and they've taken radically different approaches to the iconic vigilante. In *Batman* and especially *Batman Returns*, Burton took the essential unrealism of a comic-book landscape and deliberately heightened it, creating a stylized alternative universe populated by caricatures and freaks—its Gotham an out-of-time blend of gothic and Art Deco, the Thirties and the Eighties; its villains campy and sinister all at once; and its overall sensibility seemingly drawn, like much of Burton's oeuvre, from the fever dreams of a black-humored, bloody-minded adolescent.

Fifteen years later, Christopher Nolan has taken Batman in precisely the opposite direction—toward a harrowing realism that owes as much to Sidney Lumet or Quentin Tarantino as it does to the world of Batmobiles and supervillains. *Batman Begins* tiptoed uneasily along the realism–fantasy divide: One moment it was a gritty urban crime drama, pitting a not-yet-super Bruce Wayne against the Gotham Mob; the next it was, well, a comic book, in which an ancient Tibetan order of warrior monks was plotting to dump a hallucinogenic toxin into Gotham's water supply and then vaporize the water so that . . . oh, you get the idea. But with *The Dark Knight*, Nolan delivers a Batman movie that's largely purged of silliness—a raw, dark, gripping narrative about politics and crime, terrorism and corruption, in which the fact that the hero happens to be wearing a Batsuit often feels almost incidental to the story.

The critics have already anointed *The Dark Knight* the finest Batman movie ever, and perhaps the finest superhero film, period. But in the long run, I think Burton's approach may hold up slightly better. His Batman movies were considerably less ambitious than what Nolan is attempting here—as much as I love *Batman Returns*, I wouldn't use the word "Shakespearean" to describe its ambitions—but they had the advantage of cutting with the grain of the genre he was working in. Burton aimed to fulfill the superhero movie; Nolan wants to transcend it. But no matter how dark *The Dark Knight* gets, or how high it ratchets up the stakes, he keeps bumping his head on the ceiling.

Here's a capsule summary of the great film that *The Dark Knight* wants to be. By dressing up in a Batsuit and fighting crime by night, the billionaire Bruce Wayne (Christian Bale) has brought some semblance of order to a lawless modern city. But the order he's achieved is transient, and when a new hero emerges—the white-knight district attorney Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart)—who seems capable of fighting crime within the system, Batman contemplates retirement. In an ideal world, Gotham wouldn't need a costumed freak to handle lawbreaking; moreover, taking off the Batsuit would give him the chance to woo back his lost love, Rachel Dawes (Maggie Gyllenhaal)—who doesn't care to date a vigilante and is cuddling up to Dent.

The difficulty with this plan is that by wounding the Mob, the Batman-Dent one-two punch has made Gotham's gangsters desperate—desperate enough to make a deal with the devil, and let him drag the whole city down to hell. That devil would be Heath Ledger's Joker, a shambling, hissing, lipsmacking Iago in facial scars and clown makeup, and one of the scariest nihilists ever to slither into a summer popcorn film. (Ledger deserves all the posthumous accolades he's received; indeed, I suspect that his untimely death actually means that this performance will end up being *under*rated, its greatness slightly undercut by the sense of obligation that attends the praise that's heaped upon it.) The Joker is a man from nowhere: He doesn't want money, he doesn't want power, and he doesn't care if he lives or dies. He just "wants to see the world burn," as Wayne's butler, Alfred (Michael Caine), puts it. And stopping him will come at a cost—in laws broken, liberties trampled (not for nothing have the movie's post-9/11 themes been read as essentially pro-Bush), lies embraced, and lives destroyed—that may be more than anyone can bear.

"Welcome to a world without rules," *The Dark Knight*'s most arresting poster promises. That's precisely what the set-up I've just sketched out promises the audience—a rare $185 million blockbuster in which it seems as though anything can happen, and nothing, not even the hero's triumph, feels rote or foreordained.

But it's also precisely what Nolan can't quite deliver, because he's making a Batman movie, after all, and no matter how dark things get there are rules you have to follow. You have to introduce some totally ridiculous technologies (like a sonar-based surveillance system that lets Batman spy on all of Gotham) and some snazzy new gadgets (the "Batpod" motorcycle) so that all the fanboys in the audience can scream, "Yeah! Wicked!" (Given the gravity *The Dark Knight* otherwise aspires to, these comic-book touches feel like the equivalent of Michael Corleone's whipping out a laser gun midway through *The Godfather*.) You have to include at least one extended action sequence where Batman performs jujitsu on the laws of physics—in this case, an assault on a mobster's Hong Kong skyscraper—even if it's superfluous to the plot. And you have to end the film with a climactic face-off between the hero and the villains, even if it drags the movie out for an unnecessary 40 minutes and saps away the tragic momentum the first two acts have built.

What's more, there are things you just *can't* do. When the Joker promises to blow up a hospital, you know the building will be evacuated before the bombs go off. When Batman promises to give up his surveillance powers once the present emergency is over, you know he'll follow through. And when the Joker tells Batman, in one of the film's most chilling scenes, "I'll show you. . . . When the chips are down, these civilized people will eat each other," you know he'll be proven wrong.

These predictabilities are not a problem for the top-of-the-line superhero movie that *The Dark Knight* succeeds in being. They're only problems for the still-better movie that it clearly wants to be. I like what Christopher Nolan has done here; I'd just like to see what he can do in a film with slightly fewer rules. **NR**

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■ CITY DESK ■

Acts of Mercy

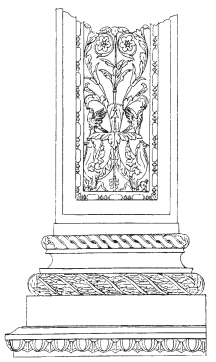
RICHARD BROOKHISER

A BLOCK from my door is a dialysis outpatient facility run by one of the local hospitals. I live on an island of health care. The hospitals line the East River like battleships; the sign of one glows outside my window at night, just under moonrise. Thanks to a century and more of money, charity, and Jewish doctors, our hospitals can treat anything from ocular pediatric cancer to knife wounds on a Saturday night. You would hardly know the neighborhood dialysis unit is where it is. It inhabits an ordinary office building, the entrance sitting behind a Szechuan restaurant; no big marquee proclaims it. The only signs that it is there are the occasional presence in the street of vans unloading patients, and the almost continuous presence on the sidewalk of nurses and technicians, coming and going, taking the air and taking breaks.

Diabetes is a chronic condition, so you don't see flashing ambulances bringing victims of kidney failure, as you would at an emergency room. The vehicles on my street are the routine transport of regular customers who come for their three- or five-times-a-week appointments with salvation. The plenitude of diseases in the world makes you grateful that you do not have all of them, and mindful that the systems that produce color and nebulae should also be so fecund when it comes to humiliation and suffering.

Being human, we resist. We don't take it lying down, even when we are bedridden. Researchers interrogate the life force for cures; physicians strain to apply knowledge to the mysteries of specific cases (in his profession, every Dr. Watson is a Sherlock Holmes); and the men and women on the sidewalk draw the blood, take the pulse, push the gurneys, and check the drips. They are the noncoms of the army of medicine, its sergeants, corporals, and grunts.

The nurses and technicians wear scrubs—the two-piece, solid-color outfits, easily washable, without ornaments or protrusions, that are the uniforms of their occupation. I can remember a time when white was the color of health care. Now scrubs run to teal, aqua, even eggplant purple. There must be some reason, possibly scientific, for the color shift; it doesn't look like a call by Tom Ford. The men and women in the scrubs are young; energy of the sort they need starts draining away at age 30. Racially and ethnically, they are subway New Yorkers, black, Hispanic, Asian; many I would guess are immigrants. The kids in the high school and the clients in the welfare office that share the intersection with the dialysis unit look similar. The men and women in scrubs have graduated from the first, and passed by the second. What could not be predicted by any occupational or demographic model is their attitude: Almost all seem to have good humor and high spirits.



We are all good these days (haven't you heard?). Starlets cruise the plague and combat zones of the world for orphans of color. We are commanded to worry about polar bears and the ice-cap shortage. Habeas corpus will be extended to al-Qaeda and apes. But in the daily churn of ordinary life, these young men and women are committing more than their share of goodness. Kipling and Christopher Hitchens praise the men who guard us while we sleep. These are the men and women who guard us when we can't sleep for pain. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us," cries Hamlet when he first sees his father's ghost stalking the battlements. These are the angels that minister to us in the castle of illness.

I do not mean to gush. If we overheard their conversation, it would no doubt curl our hair. Every profession has its professionalism, the savvy that helps you spot and solve problems, and that slides you through them without emotional wear and tear. When you have seen everything, you can't afford to be too impressed by anything. So poor X finally checked out. Bring on Y. The grind of treatment is not deadening—Keats was a surgeon's apprentice—but it can make for briskness on the job. If you want sympathy, ask your family. (Oops—better have friends too, just in case.) From the men and women in scrubs you want skill. If you have ever watched in fascination while someone pokes your arm like a wildcatter looking for a vein, you know what lack of it means.

And yet how often do these attendants give more. From my own time in the hospital (not in dialysis, thank God; how much is that cancer in the window?), I remember the kind words, the neck rubs, the hymns a singer sang to herself but also for me—none of them specified on my chart, all of them I have to think therapeutic. One nurse was alarmed for my sake when she heard me listening to a recording of Robert Frost reading "The Witch of Coos," a poem about a crazy old woman in the New England backcountry who thinks she has live bones in her attic. The nurse was worried I might depress myself. Good thing she didn't hear William Empson reading "Missing Dates."

> Slowly the poison the whole
> bloodstream fills.
> The waste remains, the waste remains
> and kills.

The people in scrubs take their jobs to have a job, but they could also work in the post office. The helping professions draw people who want or need to help.

It is sad how many of them spend their breaks on the sidewalk smoking. Mayor Bloomberg's New York is so health-conscious that if you want to smoke you have to go outside for an additional blast of truck exhaust. Yet the people who should best know the consequences of their habit are out there, in the midday crush, puffing away. Either they are young enough to think they will live forever, or old enough in their line of work to know that no one does. **NR**

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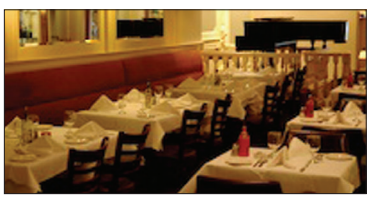

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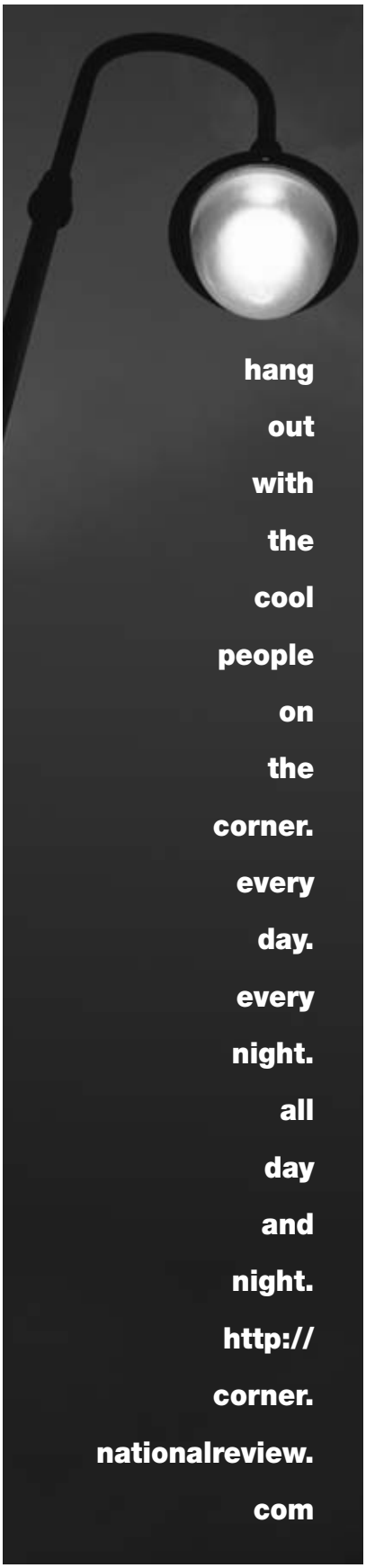

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but enough about you

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

The Age Thing

In America, the young are always ready to give to those who are older than themselves the full benefits of their inexperience.
—Oscar Wilde

THAT was quite the contrast a few weeks ago: Obama choppering over Baghdad in the company of General Petraeus ("General Betray-Us," as MoveOn.org, one of Senator Obama's cyber cheering sections, calls him), looking like an outtake from *Black Hawk Down*; and the same day, eight thousand miles away, Senator McCain with President Bush 41 ("the Good Bush," as more or less everyone calls him these days), looking like an outtake from *Grumpy Old Men*. Don't get me wrong. I love the Good Bush and I like John McCain, but it was a dramatic, stereoptican presentation of what this contest boils down to, for some: the Old Fart versus the Fresh Prince of Hyde Park.

I'm 55 and—touch wood—in reasonably good health, but I'm now a member of that "55+" demographic, the Green Room to the River Styx. Like other neo–old farts of my generation, I still watch the TV evening news most nights. All the ads, touching on disgusting toe fungi to urgent bladders, or worse ("Gotta go gotta go gotta go!"), seem designed to show me the desolation that lies ahead; adding insult, the accompanying jingles are all anthems from my youth, some of which were played onstage at Woodstock. When Led Zeppelin songs are being used to push Cadillacs, and the Rolling Stones' "I'm Free" is at the service of getting us to switch to the Chase "Freedom" credit card, something more than a paradigm has shifted.

John McCain would be 72 on his inaugural day; Barack Obama, 47. Anyone who can endure the bastinadoes and other horrors of being a POW in North Vietnam might be accorded the benefit of the doubt as possessing the physical resources and stamina to pull off a septuagenarian presidency. McCain's medical history—at 1,173 pages only a tad longer than Bill Clinton's autobiography, and for my money, better reading—would seem to indicate that he's still under warranty, good under the hood until, oh, 87, say, by which point the planet will have run out of fossil fuel. His "mental acuity," the polite media term for "still possessing enough marbles not to press the nuclear button when all you want is to order lunch," becomes the big question mark. As we learned from Reagan, forgetful presidents can be kind of sweet old things and rather loveable. But you do need a tiptop-good chief of staff. How about Mitt Romney? That way we don't have to worry about The Mormon Thing.

On the other side, we have in Barack Obama the very picture of youth. A few weeks ago, on a day off, he worked out *three times*. Is the nation ready for this kind of energy? We've had a president for the last seven years who exercised like a maniac and look where that got us. President "The Bad" Bush 43 was 54 when he took office. Odd how no one today looks back on that springtime as a period of youth and vigor.

Senator Obama's boosters pooh-pooh his Youth Thing problem, sometimes a bit grandiosely. Al Gore (44 when he became vice president) was moved to quote something President Kennedy (after Teddy Roosevelt, our youngest president) used on one of his detractors: "To exclude from positions of trust and command all those below the age of 44 would have kept Jefferson from writing the Declaration of Independence, Washington from commanding the Continental Army, Madison from fathering the Constitution, . . . and Christopher Columbus from discovering America." He quoted this in the presence of a beaming Obama, and beam the senator might, having just been not so subtly compared to Jefferson, Washington, Madison, and Columbus. If he lives up to those paradigms, we will be in excellent hands indeed.

Back to McCain: Experience is no guarantor of greatness, or even wisdom, as George Will recently reminded us wittily:

> The president who came to office with the most glittering array of experiences had served 10 years in the House of Representatives, then became minister to Russia, then served 10 years in the Senate, then four years as secretary of state (during a war that enlarged the nation by 33 percent), then was minister to Britain. Then, in 1856, James Buchanan was elected president and in just one term secured a strong claim to being ranked as America's worst president. Abraham Lincoln, the inexperienced former one-term congressman, had an easy act to follow.

In the days ahead, we'll be hearing a lot from one side that Winston Churchill was 65 when he first became prime minister and 76 when he had an encore; from the other side, we'll be hearing about JFK and, in the spirit of nonpartisanship, Teddy Roosevelt. For Obama, time will be the inevitable leveler, as Conrad Aiken noted in his lovely poem "All Lovely Things."

All lovely things will have an ending,
All lovely things will fade and die,
And youth, that's now so bravely
spending,
Will beg a penny by and by.

And John McCain, denied the presidency, will be entitled to the serenity that comes with having fought the good fight, toe fungi be damned. It was on display during his visit with 41. The Good Bush waved away the reporters clamoring at him for his opinion on Obama's Iraq-withdrawal plan. "I don't follow this day to day anymore. Sit here by the ocean, watch the tide come in and out." **NR**

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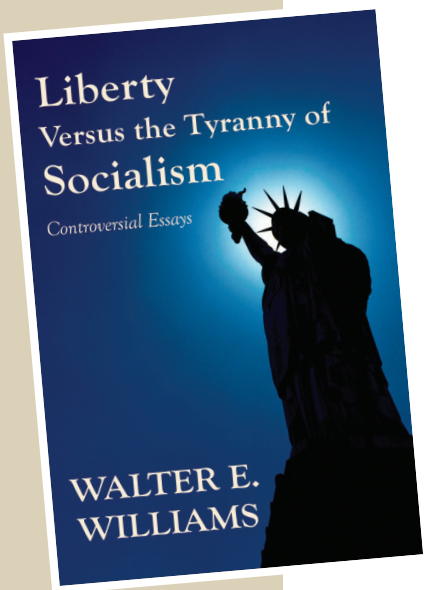

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Walter E. Williams is the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics at George Mason University and a nationally syndicated columnist.

October 2008, 377 pages
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